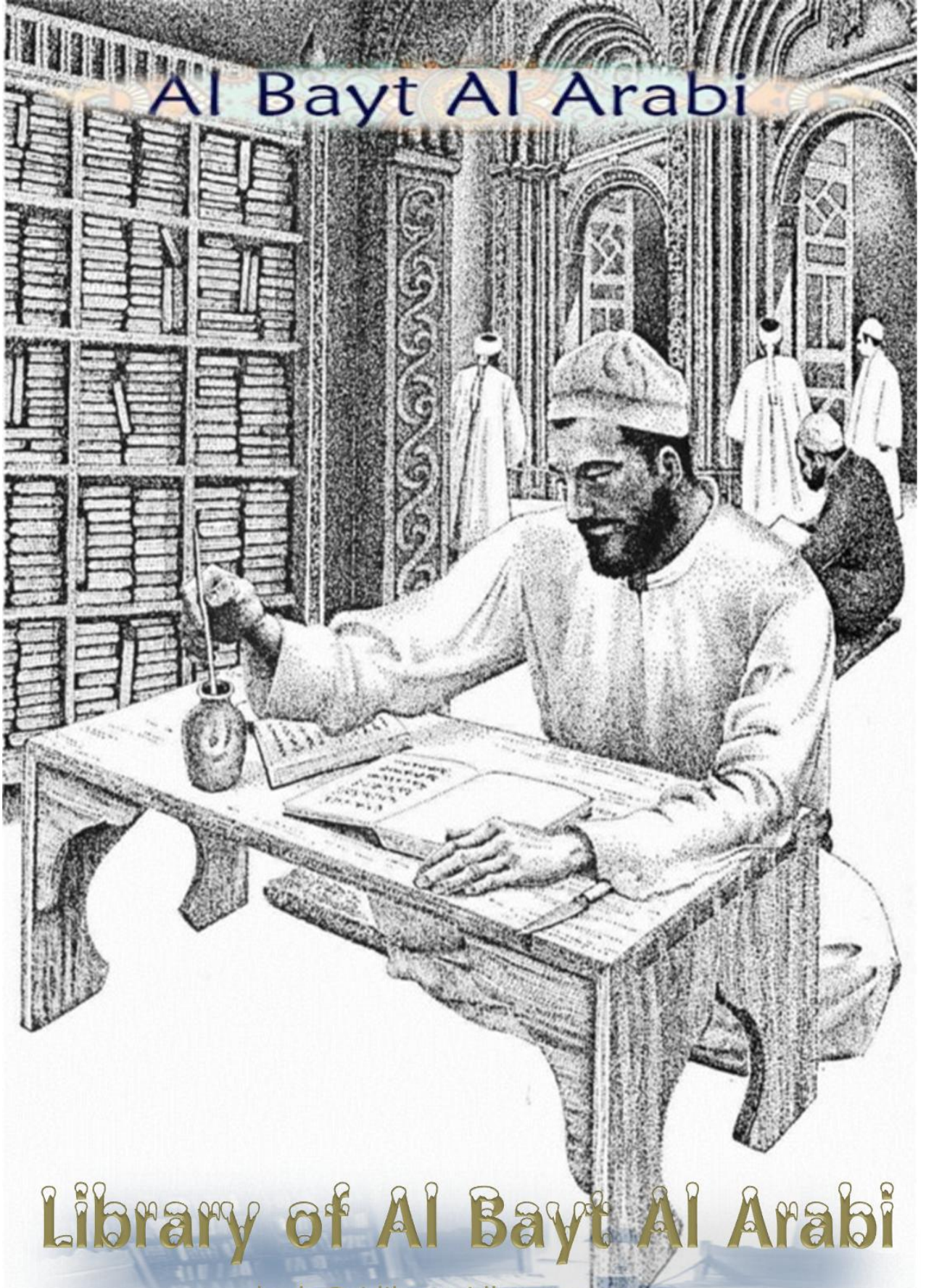


Managing Instability in Algeria

Elites and political change since 1995

Isabelle Werenfels

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Managing Instability in Algeria

Since 1989 Algeria has ridden a political rollercoaster, going from promising democratization to military authoritarianism and civil war to limited political opening. This new book seeks to understand the relationship between elite dynamics and strategies and the lack of profound political change in Algeria after 1995, when the country's military rulers returned to electoral processes.

Using evidence from extensive fieldwork, Isabelle Werenfels exposes successful survival strategies of an opaque authoritarian elite in a changing domestic and international environment. The main focus is on:

- The changing balance of power between different elite segments;
- The modes of generation change and the different emerging young elite types;
- Constraints, obligations and opportunities arising from elite embeddedness in clientelist networks and in specific social and economic structures.

Werenfels concludes that existing changes in elite composition and reform-oriented attitudes are unlikely to translate into political system change unless they coincide with a number of external and internal factors. Even if change came to Algeria it would most likely not result in Western-style democracy: the rentier nature of the economy and the dominant socio-cultural practices shaped partly by the current elite might simply produce similar political elites and structures.

Building rare evidence from fieldwork into a multidisciplinary analytical framework, this book presents a significant input to the more general literature on transition processes and is particularly relevant as the West pushes for democratic reforms in the Middle East and North Africa.

Isabelle Werenfels is a research associate at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), and has lectured at Freie Universität, Berlin. Her recent publications in English and German deal with the question of democratization and with Islamist movements in the Maghreb region.

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To Andreas

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Abbreviations

AIS	Armée Islamique du Salut
ALN	Armée de Libération Nationale
ANP	Armée Nationale Populaire
APC	Assemblée Populaire Communale
APN	Assemblée Populaire Nationale
APW	Assemblée Populaire de Wilaya
BP	Bureau Politique
BTS	Batna, Tebessa, Souk-Ahras
CADC	Coordination des Aârouch, des Dairas et des Communes
CAP	Confédération Algérienne du Patronat
CCN	Conseil Consultatif National
CGOEA	Confédération Générale des Opérateurs Économiques Algériens
CLA	Conseil des Lycées d'Alger
CNAPEST	Conseil National Autonome des Professeurs de l'Enseignement Secondaire et Technique
CNES	Conseil National Économique et Social
CNPA	Confédération Nationale du Patronat Algérien
CNT	Conseil National de Transition
DGSN	Direction Générale de la Sûreté Nationale
DRS	Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité (ex-Sécurité Militaire)
FCE	Forum des Chefs d'Entreprise
FFS	Front des Forces Socialistes
FIS	Front Islamique du Salut
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale
FNTE	Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs de l'Éducation
GIA	Groupeement Islamique Armé
GLD	Groupes de Légitime Défense
GSPC	Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat
HCE	Haut Comité d'État
HCI	Haut Conseil Islamique
LADDDH	Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme

LADH	Ligue Algérienne des Droits de l'Homme
MAK	Mouvement pour l'Autonomie de la Kabylie
MALG	Ministère de l'Armement et des Liaisons Générales
MAOL	Mouvement Algérien des Officiers Libres
MCB	Mouvement Culturel Berbère
MDS	Mouvement Démocratique et Social
MRN	Mouvement pour la Réforme Nationale/El Islah
MSP	Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix (ex-Hamas)
ONEC	Organisation Nationale des Enfants de Chouhada
ONEM	Organisation des Enfants de Moudjahidine
ONM	Organisation Nationale des Moudjahidine
ONS	Office Nationale de Statistique
OSCP	Organisations Scientifiques, Culturelles et Professionnelles
PAGS	Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste
PRE	Politically relevant elite
PT	Parti des Travailleurs
RAJ	Rassemblement Action Jeunesse
RCD	Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie
RND	Rassemblement National pour la Démocratie
SATEF	Syndicat Autonome des Travailleurs de l'Éducation et de la Formation
SM	Sécurité Militaire
SNAPAP	Syndicat National des Personnels de l'Administration Publique
UGTA	Union Nationale des Travailleurs Algériens
UNEA	Union Nationale des Étudiants Algériens
UNFA	Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes
UNJA	Union Nationale de la Jeunesse Algérienne
UNPA	Union Nationale des Paysans Algériens

I Introduction

Warum, dachte ich, sinkt wohl das Gewölbe nicht ein, da es doch *keine* Stütze hat? Es steht, antwortete ich, *weil alle Steine auf einmal einstürzen wollen*.

[Why, I asked myself, does this arch not collapse, since after all it has *no* support? It remains standing, I answered, *because all the stones tend to collapse at the same time*.]

(Kleist 1982)

This study deals with elite dynamics and elite change in Algeria and how these interact with political system transformation. Arab elites were a research topic much *en vogue* from the 1960s to the early 1980s in the context of the emergence of newly independent Arab states in the post-colonial era. Due to the lack of elite change in these states for decades – leaders, such as King Hussein of Jordan, stayed in power for up to forty years – and the accompanying continuity in the political systems, studies of Arab elites became rare in the 1980s. Elites in the Arab world did not come back into focus until the 1990s.¹ This renewed attention had two main reasons. First, the numerous transitions to democracy in Latin America and in former Eastern European socialist countries caused observers to ask why Arab regimes and their elites, in contrast, remained so resistant to democratic change. Second, with several of the Arab incumbent prime decision-makers passing away in the late 1990s, researchers wondered what these changes implied for the prospects of political system transformation in Arab countries. This study can thus be situated in the larger context of more recent studies on elite change and system transformation in the Arab world.

1 Background to the study

In the forty years of its independence Algeria has again and again left researchers puzzled. Few observers would have predicted that Algeria was to become the first Arab country to hold free and fair elections in 1990 or that the country's Islamist movement would within a few years develop into the strongest political force. It was not easy to foresee that what looked like the

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beginning of a democratic transition would quickly glide off into a civil war, while reviving old and producing new authoritarian structures. In the early 2000s, the state of Algerian affairs was subject to widely diverging interpretations. Some observers spoke of a disintegrating state led by generals with a human rights record comparable to that of Yugoslavia's ex-president Milosevic or Chile's General Pinochet (Ruf 2001) while others optimistically diagnosed 'stirrings of democracy'.² Even Algerian decision-makers apparently found it difficult to precisely describe the contemporary political system that had been, at least partly, shaped by them: 'The regime is neither dictatorial, nor democratic, nor presidential, nor parliamentary . . . We are certainly not living in a monarchy but are we really in a republic?' is how a member of the Algerian core elite put it in 2004.³

Algeria, in contrast to many Arab countries, was not ruled by the same leader for two or more decades. Nevertheless, it was governed by the same forces – a limited number of individuals sharing a common historical experience – following its independence from France in 1962. A small number of military leaders and party functionaries that emerged during the war of independence erected a bureaucratic authoritarian system with the army as its backbone and monopolized the key positions in state institutions for decades. New recruits into these positions came primarily from the pool of 'old comrades'. Loyalties and networks established during the war prevailed after independence, and different 'clans' of revolutionaries as well as clans based on regional and other allegiances within the elite competed over rents, power and positions. At times they reached uneasy agreements (as during the era of Houari Boumedienne, 1965 to 1978); at other times they engaged in fierce struggles (as during Chadli Bendjedid's rule in the 1980s). This relative continuity in elites seemed poised to end with the political opening in 1989, which promised a radical reform of the existing system and elite change. The military's coup d'état in 1992 – following the triumph of the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) in the first round of Algeria's first pluralistic and free parliamentary elections – put an end to this process.

Even though Algeria returned to authoritarian rule in 1992 after its 'short flirt with democracy', and even though the incumbent elites prevailed, both the Algerian political system and the Algerian elites appeared to experience some substantial changes as of the mid-1990s. One of the most obvious developments was the sharp increase in the number of individual and collective actors who exerted influence on decisions concerning strategic issues of national relevance. Some of these actors had gained strong direct or indirect political influence during the political opening between 1989 and 1991 and were able to maintain some of their former influence or regain it during the decade after the coup. In addition, new actors with political influence – for example, the leaders of the Kabyle protest movement – emerged in the late 1990s or early 2000s. The same period also witnessed the replacement of the old guard, the 'revolutionaries', by two younger generations in many elite segments as well as a gradual decrease of army involvement in (day-to-day) politics.

Domestic as well as international factors led to these changes. The civil war which broke out after the 1992 coup led not only to bloody repression but also to co-optation and fragmentation of the Islamist opposition. The army's attempt to give its authoritarian rule a constitutional and democratic façade through pluralist presidential elections (in 1995, 1999 and 2004) and parliamentary elections (in 1997 and 2002) offered main opposition actors a platform and brought opposition parties into parliament and even into the government coalition for the first time. The gradual increase in freedom of expression as of the mid-1990s – not least induced by pressure from the Algerian opposition in exile and by international human rights activists – boosted the political impact of the Algerian printed press. Finally, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programme and debt rescheduling not only brought new actors onto the political stage but also opened rent-seeking avenues beyond oil for incumbent and emerging elites.

The picture the country presented in early 2004 was one of paradoxes. According to criteria used in much of the actor-oriented transition literature,⁴ Algeria did not look like an unlikely candidate for transition from an authoritarian to a (somewhat) democratic regime. Cracks in the regime were deep, including splits among the prime decision-makers, the core elite. Reformers struggled against hardliners throughout the 1990s, allowing for – albeit still very limited – autonomous organization of civil society. By the beginning of the new millennium, freedom of expression was remarkable, resulting in a printed press that was among the freest in the Arab world. Moreover, according to observers such as Quandt (2002: 19), 'popular sentiment seems to favor democracy'. In Kabylia, a militant protest movement was able to form and to extricate concessions from the government. Vocal opposition forces both in Algeria and in French exile were at least indirectly and temporarily able to exert some influence on political processes in Algeria. Furthermore, the regime experienced economic shocks and external pressure for extensive economic liberalization. Last but not least, in 2004 the army's general command, for the first time in the history of independent Algeria, neither imposed, pushed nor appeared to favour a candidate in the presidential elections. When President Bouteflika was re-elected with an overwhelming 84.99 per cent of the votes cast, international observers spoke of elections that met European standards.⁵ While the poll itself indeed appeared to be marked by few irregularities, developments preceding it – manipulation of the state media, repression of the private press hostile to the president, exclusion of hopeful candidates, allocation of state funds to buy votes, and instrumentalization of the judiciary and the administration for the president's re-election⁶ – demonstrated that speaking of democratization remained problematic and, at best, premature. Throughout Bouteflika's first term the political and civil rights guaranteed in the constitution did not translate into democratic practice, 'truly' democratic tendencies remained confined to small nuclei of activists, and though the army's informal involvement in politics

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became less obvious it showed no signs of complete discontinuation. As a result, in 2004 Freedom House still classified Algeria as ‘not free’.⁷ Algeria thus experienced system continuity despite the aforementioned changes.

2 Research interest and key questions

This study seeks to understand the relationship between elite dynamics and strategies and the lack of profound political change in Algeria after 1995, when a political and economic re-liberalization process that at times developed potentially system destabilizing dynamics set in. In other words: obstacles and resistance to transition in Algeria will be viewed through the prism of the elite and its dynamics. But why analyse political change, in particular the lack of it, through a study of elites, that is ‘actors’ instead of ‘structures’? Obviously, the study of actors and structures should not be mutually exclusive but, to quote Tachau (1975: 3), ‘elites provide a realistic and coherent analytical thread on which to base analysis of the ongoing process of change’. This study departs from the assumption of Burton and Higley (2001: 182) that ‘political elite transformations are the fulcrums for fundamental political change’ and argues, in addition, that any attempt to understand the ‘stickiness’ of Algerian authoritarianism in the period under examination requires a focus not only on the dynamics and recruitment patterns within the Algerian elite but also on the different specific ways in which the elite was shaped and constrained by changing domestic and international political, social, economic and cultural forces. Proceeding in this way allows for bringing structures back into the analysis.

The elites under examination in this study are neither ‘elites’ in the most general sense – that is, the top of each social segment – nor ‘the political elite’ in a narrow sense – that is, those in top positions of the formal political system. Rather, the focus is on what is termed the politically relevant elite (PRE), defined as all those individual and collective actors with direct or indirect influence on strategic decisions of national relevance.⁸ The focus on influence rather than on formal position and/or function allows for a dynamic picture of elites as well as for the inclusion of structural constraints on elites, given that the level of influence of politically relevant individuals and collectives is subject to changing domestic and international political, social and economic conditions.

Because of its explicit focus on the question of democratic transition, this study could be reproached for being normative and having a democracy bias, i.e. viewing Western-style democracy as the necessary and best political outcome for Algeria. However, the goal of this study is not to propagate democratization but to highlight specific forms of resistance and obstacles to democratic transition. The reason democratization was chosen as a key issue was because it took centre-stage in Algerian public discourse – official and from the opposition – in the early 2000s. Closer examination of the Algerian case will weaken two main lines of argument often used in the context of

democratization in the Arab world. The first one is the culturalist and often essentialist view that the Arab world is incapable of democratization because of its socio-cultural structures, namely Islam or ‘traditional’ (e.g. patriarchal) social structures.⁹ The second line of argument has a strong elite bias and is reflected in the theories of ‘easy democratization with a little outside help’. ‘Theories’, such as those emerging from the United States’ administration in the context of the 2003 war on Iraq, assumed that the replacement of top leaders in conjunction with ‘some external guidance’ would automatically lead to democratic rule.¹⁰ Closer examination of the Algerian trajectory shows that neither an exclusively structure-oriented nor an exclusively actor-oriented approach can explain the persistence of authoritarianism.

3 Main line of argument

In the early 2000s, Algeria’s prime decision-makers had plenty of reasons to pat themselves on the back. Only a few years after the height of a civil war that had pushed the country to the verge of state collapse and challenged their rule, they managed to lead Algeria out of international political isolation, were able to present a rosy macro-economic balance sheet, and appeared to have a relatively firm grip on the country. The main hypothesis of this study is that the reason for this ‘success story’ was that the prime decision-makers, the core elite, managed to turn the ‘Dilemma of Simultaneity’ (Offe 1994: 57–80) – the challenges posed by the more or less parallel opening and reforms of the political and the economic systems¹¹ – to their collective and individual advantage. They were largely able to prevent political system transformation while at the same time blocking some but not all economic reforms. The assumption made here is, moreover, that what looked like the successful elite management of old and new potentially destabilizing dynamics could not be solely attributed to elite strategies. In fact, it had much to do with these strategies being supported by specific national and international economic, social and cultural structures in such a way that the various potential dynamics of destabilization counter-balanced each other. The situation could thus be best described with the oxymoron ‘equilibrium of instability’: that is, a balance – albeit a fragile one – between the various (potentially) destabilizing dynamics. This balance explains why political liberalization did not develop clearly discernable democratization dynamics, despite increasing divisions and conflicts within the core elite and a substantially reduced margin of action of the prime decision-makers due to an increase in politically relevant (veto) actors.

This study will argue that there are five main clusters of factors that contributed to keeping both destabilization and democratization dynamics in check:

- 1 A strong and increasing fragmentation of the politically relevant elite that extended into the wider population prevented broad and lasting

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- coalition-building by contesting forces, both within the PRE and outside of the elite.
- 2 The inclusion into the PRE of younger generations and actors that were pushed into the elite from below by social forces presented a valve for popular discontent. At the same time, a number of mechanisms prevented contesting actors from moving into the elite in large numbers and from upward mobility within the elite.
 - 3 Elite policy choices were based on personal interest and survival strategies rather than on attitudes and political agendas.
 - 4 Control and distribution of the hydrocarbon rent not only presented the core elite with an important instrument of power but also presented a weak point in its rule, for control of the volatile oil price was not in its hands. Economic liberalization – albeit to a limited extent – counter-balanced this volatility in that it opened new avenues for rent-seeking and rent-distribution in a time of hydrocarbon resource contraction.
 - 5 External factors such as high oil prices and the war on terror – despite their destabilizing potential – supported the political status quo by legitimizing it or by providing the financial means to maintain it.

Due to the conjuncture of the above factors, the pressure on the core elite to conclude a broad pact with political forces pushing for new democratic rules of the game remained low. At the end of Bouteflika's first term it appeared that existing changes in elite composition and reform-oriented attitudes could translate into political system change only if they coincided with a number of external and internal factors that have shaken the Algerian system in the past: economic shock, popular uprisings extending beyond one region, and external pressures for full implementation of international agreements and economic reforms. Such a conjuncture of developments is, however, improbable. Moreover, even if change came to Algeria, it would most likely not result in Western-style democracy: The rentier nature of the Algerian economy and the dominant socio-cultural practices shaped partly by the current elite might simply produce similar political elites and structures.

4 **Methods, sources and data**

This study relies both on primary sources from Algeria and on two strands of scholarly literature: (1) theoretical approaches to transition and elites (discussed in detail in Chapter II), and (2) case studies dealing with Arab elites in general and Algeria in particular. The data providing the basis for this study comes primarily from the Algerian printed press, pamphlets and official sources; from interviews conducted with over a hundred members of the Algerian elite between February 2001 and April 2004; and from questionnaires handed out to a majority of these interviewees.¹² Working with most of these primary sources posed a number of methodological challenges. Information on political processes found in the Algerian press or offered by

Algerian interlocutors – both elite and non-elite – tended to be dominated by speculation, rumour and conspiracy theories. Much of what ended up in the media on decision-making processes appeared to be deliberate leaks by one faction within the elite to discredit a foe and could contain much truth, some truth or none at all. Yet, once the political and (probable) military affiliations of the main papers had been identified, the printed press proved to be a good source for identifying trends among the different competing elite factions – even if many of the ‘hard facts’ had to be taken with a grain of salt.

The low reliability of facts and figures reported in the press was not surprising given the opaqueness of decision-making processes and the reticence of state institutions to publish quantitative data – other than on economic developments – or to give information that could have made decision-making processes more transparent. The information on elites most easily accessible was that on the backgrounds of members of formal political institutions. However, quantitative data on elite developments could at best serve as an indicator for certain processes and dynamics of interest for this research – the generational change being one example – but it could not adequately reflect the nature of these processes and dynamics, let alone provide an explanation for them.

Therefore, the sources constituting the main pillar of this study were interviews conducted with: (1) members or ex-members of the Algerian elite; (2) well-informed but politically not necessarily relevant officials in state institutions; (3) Algerian scholars and journalists; and (4) high-ranking foreign diplomats. Interviewees belonging to the politically relevant elite were selected according to the following criteria: high reputed influence on decision-making processes and/or high public visibility in such processes and accessibility. The sample of politically relevant elites was representative in that it included all important factions within the politically relevant elite in the period under examination, but no claim is made that the sample mirrored the exact (measurable) influence of each elite type. The interviewees belonging to the elite were asked to fill in a questionnaire on their family background, and to participate in a semi-structured interview revolving around their formative experiences, political socialization, political agendas, their view of the country’s main political, economic and social problems and their strategies for solving them.

Accessibility to politically relevant elites up to the level of minister, prime minister and to certain presidential advisers proved surprisingly easy. However, access to core elite members, i.e. the president and a number of generals either in the presidency or in the army’s general command, was extremely difficult. Access to army elites in general was problematic. Two generals who used to belong to the innermost circle of decision-making – one had taken a position in opposition to the government and the other belonged to the putschists in 1992 and, despite being retired, was still close to some of the prime decision-makers in 2004 – agreed to grant interviews.

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A number of other top generals, including core elite members, were engaged in brief informal discussions at official events – e.g. an international symposium on terrorism in 2002 at which all prime decision-makers participated, or embassy receptions. All active duty army officers asked to remain anonymous. Also, those interviewees answering questionnaires were promised that data on their personal backgrounds and their political views would be factored into the analysis but not tied to names unless they agreed to this. Interlocutors in high-level public functions presented an exception to the rule and are generally cited by name, unless they explicitly wished to speak off the record.

Finally, it has to be stressed that during the five months of fieldwork conducted in Algeria, this researcher was able to move about freely, to interview a member of the (ex-)leadership of the forbidden FIS, and to meet leaders of the Kabyle protest movement shortly before they were arrested – all apparently without being followed. This was all the more surprising as diplomats needed special permits to leave the Greater Algiers area and journalists were being accompanied by security forces and, presumably, the secret services.

5 **Plan of the study**

The following chapter deals with theoretical and methodological challenges to the study of Algerian elites. Shortcomings diagnosed in these approaches guide efforts at building a framework of analysis that can contribute to overcoming these deficits. The goal, however, is neither to come up with a new macro-theory nor to develop a model that has the strictness of rational choice approaches, but rather a ‘synthesized’ framework which allows for a systematic step-by-step approach to the above questions through the use of a set of specific analytical tools.

Chapter III takes account of the fact that contemporary Algerian elites do not act in a historic vacuum. Therefore, it briefly highlights the shaping of the post-colonial system and its elites from 1962 to the end of the single-party era in 1989, as well as the changes introduced in the brief political opening from 1989 to 1991. The colonial history and the Algerian war of independence (1954–62) are only referred to where necessary for understanding later elite developments.

The focus in Chapter IV is on changes in the composition of the politically relevant elite and in the balance of power between the various actors constituting this elite as of the mid-1990s, and in particular in the first term of the Bouteflika presidency (1999–2004). In Chapter V, the generational change in the Algerian elite which began in the 1990s serves as the basis for analysis of both recruitment mechanisms and elite attitudes and agendas. Analysis of emerging elite types and their agendas allows for identification of (potential) reformers and hardliners, and raises the question why, despite an apparent predominance of pro-reform outlooks, few steps towards political

and economic reform and even fewer, if any at all, towards political system transformation could be identified.

Hence, Chapter VI analyses the main factors – beyond political attitudes and agendas – which constrain and mould elite choices. This requires broadening the focus to the larger socio-cultural and economic context in which elites act. The analysis of structural constraints on elites reveals a number of factors responsible for resistance to political change that extend beyond direct elite attempts to block such change.

Chapter VII, the final chapter, focuses on how the interplay among elite dynamics, outlooks, strategies and choices, (structural) external factors and liberalization dynamics – discussed from different perspectives in the previous chapters – led to a preservation of the existing rules of the political game and to the paradoxical situation of a delicate equilibrium of instability. With resistance to change towards more democratic rules originating both from actors and from structures, the final question addressed is whether there are forces or factors, or conjunctures thereof, which could nevertheless propel a transition process in the future.

II Elites and the question of transition in Algeria

Theoretical and methodological challenges

In 1998 William Quandt wrote that

Algeria should be thought of as a country in the early stages of a difficult transition away from its authoritarian past. But it will not be surprising if Algeria reaches the goal of accountable, representative government in advance of many others in the region.

(1998: 164)

A few years earlier, in the beginning of the 1990s, political scientists had been even more upbeat about Algeria's prospects for becoming the Arab world's first democracy. Dillman (1992: 31) went as far as to state that 'Algeria to date is the only Arab or Muslim country that has significantly democratized its political system and the only country with an oil-based economy that has abandoned authoritarianism'. Indeed, Algeria between 1989 and 1991 *prima facie* resembled a textbook case of a liberalization and democratization process that fitted actor- or elite-oriented transition models based on transition experiences in Latin America and Eastern Europe.¹ However, developments in Algeria after the coup d'état in 1992, and particularly after the mid-1990s re-liberalization process that generated very different dynamics, call for the consultation of additional explanatory models.

The goal of this chapter is to elaborate a framework suited for analysis of the relationship between intra-elite dynamics, elite attitudes, strategies and choices and political system change,² or more precisely the absence of such change in Algeria after 1995, when the country experienced a second wave of political and economic liberalization. In a first and second step, two of the theoretical approaches most obvious for tackling this question, transition theory and elite theory, including earlier approaches to Algerian elites, will be discussed critically. A third step focuses on ways to compensate for explanatory deficits of these theories when applied to contemporary Algeria. This will, finally, lead to a theoretical and methodological framework that not only allows for analysis of developments within the elite but also places elites in their historical, social, cultural and economic context in order to understand what guides their strategies and choices.

1 Viewing Algeria through the lens of transition theory

1.1 The appearance of a transition: Algeria between 1988 and 1991

Ideal-typically, a successful transition process consists of three phases – liberalization, democratization and democratic consolidation. Liberalization refers to a political opening in which civil and political liberties, namely freedom of speech and movement, freedom of association and freedom of political parties, are substantially increased, usually in an effort to broaden the social base of the regime without changing its basic structure. Democratization involves a change of these very structures in that the

rules and procedures of citizenship are either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles . . . or expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations . . . or extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation.

(O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 8)

Przeworski (1991: 88), moreover, stresses the importance of contestation: those forces struggling against authoritarianism 'must stand united against dictatorship but they must divide against each other'. Consolidated democracy, finally, is a regime that not only meets all the procedural criteria of democracy but in which the politically significant actors stick to the democratic rules of the game and accept the established political institutions (Higley and Gunther 1992: 3).

Liberalization processes are usually triggered by an interaction of factors from 'below and above', i.e. by mass protests, external reform pressure, economic crisis, struggles between hardliners and liberalizers³ within the authoritarian regime and/or conflicts of succession (Przeworski 1991: 56). Several of these factors came into play in Algeria in October 1988. An economic crisis, resulting from a failed industrialization project as well as a massive drop in oil prices in the mid-1980s, set off mass protests nationwide during which the security forces killed several hundred protestors. However, these uprisings were not just the expression of deteriorating socio-economic conditions, discontent over administrative, political and economic mismanagement and lack of political participation, but also of factional struggles within the core elite between proponents and opponents of economic reforms.⁴ Whether these events were staged by the economic reformers in the elite to weaken their opponents, whether they were a spontaneous 'push from below' or a combination of the two remains contested.⁵ The outcome of these events, however, is clear: they propelled the Algerian president Chadli Bendjedid to initiate a process of liberalization and even democratization – the first and to date most radical of its kind in the Arab world. What ensued were four, partly parallel, general developments which resemble those discussed in the transition literature based on case studies from countries other than Algeria.⁶

First, the events of 1988 and 1989 deepened existing cracks in the regime and splits in the ruling elite between hardliners and reformers. These splits within and among the political (i.e. the single-party), the military and administrative elite had existed since Algeria's independence. But the popular uprisings and the question of how to restore social calm aggravated existing intra-elite struggles and contributed to changing the power equation by strengthening the liberalizers. As a result of such dynamics, Chadli and his reform team, headed by prime minister Mouloud Hamrouche, dared to push ahead with profound reforms of the political system. They introduced a new constitution that laid the basis for the shift from a single to a multi-party system, which was adopted with a huge majority in a popular referendum. Moreover, the constitution guaranteed vast political and civil, individual and collective rights and – albeit limited – separation of powers. Finally, the role of the army was reduced to the classical role of armies in democratic states: the defence of the state's sovereignty, and its territorial unity and integrity.

Second, the pace of the political reforms, showing an almost parallel onset of liberalization and the first signs of democratization, did not imply that President Chadli and the more reform-oriented political elites surrounding him had turned into democrats overnight. The purpose of liberalization was rather, to quote Krämer (2001: 202) who studied such processes of liberalization in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia,

to stabilize the system in a situation of acute crisis, to broaden its base of support, to enhance its legitimacy at home and abroad and to prepare the ground for wider distribution of responsibility for structural reform involving stringent austerity measures.

Indeed, gaining popular support and enhancing their legitimacy and their power base were central for Chadli and his reform team because they embarked not only on popular political reforms but also unpopular structural reforms of the economy aimed at transforming the state-controlled economy into a market-based economy. However, what initially was designed as liberalization, limited and controlled from above and intended to co-opt and/or pacify critics,⁷ soon triggered the development of strong dynamics beyond the control of the regime. Not only did nuclei of autonomous political organization spring up by the hundreds, but an Islamist radical opposition party, the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) became the country's strongest political force virtually overnight.

The third and most crucial development in this very early phase of democratization was the emergence of a 'viable alternative' to the existing political order and its elites in the form of the FIS party. The FIS went on to win communal and regional elections in 1990 and, having emerged with an overwhelming victory from the first round of the parliamentary elections in 1991, seemed set to almost completely replace the political elites of the

authoritarian regime. Przeworski (1991: 54–5) insists that ‘what is threatening to authoritarian regimes is not the breakdown of legitimacy [which can be “compensated” by an increase in coercion] but the organization of counter-hegemony: collective projects for an alternative future’. In Algeria, regime legitimacy had been steadily dwindling since the death of President Boumedienne in 1978, yet it was not until the Islamist alternative became strong and organized nationwide that the collapse of the existing system became imminent. Obviously, transition literature drawing on Latin American and Eastern European case studies had a ‘democratic alternative’ in mind. Nevertheless, the FIS fulfilled a function similar to that of democratic parties or trade unions in Latin America or Eastern Europe, even if its ultimate goal arguably was not a Western-style democracy but an Islamic state.⁸

Fourth, with the interruption of the elections *manu militari*⁹ in 1992, the Algerian liberalization process experienced a strong setback and democratization was abruptly reversed. These developments in Algeria revealed parallels to Latin American trajectories in which the military appeared to accept withdrawal only if the preferences and policies of the civil government replacing them were similar to their own or if their candidate(s) were likely to win in elections (Rouquié 1986: 123). Case studies from Latin America, moreover, showed that even countries thought to have been demilitarized ‘for good’, such as Chile or Uruguay, could experience one or more military coups (*ibid.*: 110ff.).

Transition literature also offers a number of possible general explanations that can further elucidate why democratization failed in Algeria. One could argue with O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 37) that the successful outcome of democratization is contingent on whether ‘a select set of actors’, usually reformers in the regime and moderates in the opposition, reach a pact, i.e. an agreement on how to (re-)define ‘rules governing the exercise of power on the basis of mutual guarantees for the “vital interests” of those entering into it’ (*ibid.*).¹⁰ In Algeria, no such pact was concluded. Moreover, despite temporary agreements between reformers in the regime and moderates in the FIS and other parties on new and democratic rules, the moderates in the FIS were not able to control the radicals. One could further argue, again with Przeworski (1992: 113), that the reformers went ahead with democratization because of ‘mistaken assumptions’ or ‘miscalculations’ (Mainwaring et al. 1992: 301) regarding the nature, choices and behaviour of FIS leaders. The reformers intended to make the FIS a junior partner of the FLN and weaken the (left-wing) democrats, but after the elections in 1991 the FLN suddenly found itself in the position of junior partner – if a partner at all. In line with Schmitter (1999: 16), it is, moreover, possible to conclude that the various reform measures should have been introduced in a slower rhythm in order not to develop the unexpected and explosive dynamics that fully escaped the control of those setting the reform agenda. Finally, one could argue with Burton and Higley (2001:187) that the Algerian elite was a fragmented one,¹¹ and at no point was ‘a political elite united in consensus’ or

an ‘elite settlement’ or ‘elite convergence’ reached (Higley and Gunther 1992: 13–30)¹² – one of these authors’ main preconditions for democratization and democratic consolidation.

All these explanations have one drawback in common: they discuss the various preconditions for a successful transition which were missing, but do not deal with the underlying structural reasons – be they socio-cultural, economic or linked to external factors – for the absence of these preconditions. In other words, they serve to describe what should happen for a transition to take place, but provide little insight into ‘what went wrong’ beyond elite configurations and (mis-)calculations.

1.2 Limits of transition approaches: the Algerian trajectory after 1992

The main reason for the limited explanatory power of generalized conclusions in the actor-oriented transition literature is its narrow focus on political choices and strategies of actors. Actors are seen as the motors for change and the emphasis is put on ‘changes in the behaviours, compositions, and relations of political elites that are plausible causes, rather than outcomes, of broad economic and social trends’ (Burton and Higley 2001: 190–1). Such approaches ignore what Rustow (1970: 344) rightly deemed important: ‘the two way flow of causality, or some form of circular interaction, between politics on the one hand and economic and social conditions on the other’. Political actors in most actor-centred transition approaches are treated as largely detached from their specific social context and from the socio-cultural practices that shape the rules and dominant understanding of the political game in different specific ways in each country.¹³ By assuming that authoritarian structures are primarily a question of political choices and decisions, the social, cultural and economic bases of reproduction of such structures are ignored in transition approaches. This can induce simplistic and therefore questionable conclusions, i.e. that it is possible to abandon authoritarianism almost overnight and that this is what happened in Algeria between 1989 and 1991.¹⁴

The homogeneous categories of actors used in transition approaches are particularly problematic when applied to the Algerian case. The terms ‘hardliners’, ‘softliners’, ‘civil society’ and ‘bourgeoisie’ may be valid for the Latin American or the Eastern European context. In the case of Algeria, however, they prevent deeper understanding of political dynamics because they cannot adequately reflect the multiple cross-cutting cleavages resulting from variables such as ethnicity, language, regionalism, tribalism, economic networks and clientelist structures, and religious/secular divides.¹⁵ Without a focus on the possibilities as well as the multiple obligations, constraints and often conflicting loyalties resulting from such structural factors, the choices and strategies of the principal actors and the picture of political dynamics are likely to be superficial, misunderstood or even distorted. Also, terms such as ‘radicals’ or ‘moderates’ proved too one-dimensional in the Algerian

case because they brushed aside important social dynamics such as generational conflicts. In the case of the FIS such conflicts were important for understanding the party's comet-like ascendance and the fast drifting off into violence by its fringes. They also were a driving force behind frictions within the FIS as well as between the FIS and the regime.

Finally, two further shortcomings of the theoretical transition literature handicap their explanatory power for the Algerian case. First, with the exception of Przeworski (1991),¹⁶ the theoretical transition literature neglects the analysis of the specific nature of an economy (rentier in the Algerian case), the intertwining of political and economic liberalization steps,¹⁷ and the ensuing dynamics and effects on elite interests, strategies and choices. Second, little weight is given to the systematic analysis of external factors; Whitehead's (1996) examination of 'International Dimensions of Democratization' presents a notable exception. In Algeria, factors such as the breakdown of the Cold War order and international economic and political developments reflected in volatile oil prices, for instance, needed to be factored into the analysis because they had a decisive impact on liberalization dynamics and elite strategies in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The need for expanding the framework of analysis beyond the actor-oriented transition literature becomes particularly evident when it comes to political developments in Algeria from 1995 to the end of President Bouteflika's first term in 2004. Although this period also featured a liberalization process, the dynamics of this process are hard to grasp using actor-oriented transition approaches – namely but not only because country- and situation-specific (structural) factors such as civil war, IMF-induced structural adjustment and a changing international environment presented not only a 'backdrop' to the strategies and choices of political actors in this period but also strong conditioning forces for political decision-making.

After 1995 Algeria experienced a gradual return to constitutional institutions and processes, and a re-liberalization of political and civic life, albeit within narrow boundaries. Presidential elections (in 1995, 1999 and 2004) and parliamentary elections (in 1997 and 2002) were neither completely free nor fair.¹⁸ A new constitution, adopted in a popular referendum in 1996, expanded the already wide prerogatives of the president and the *Concorde civile*, a law building on a truce between the army and the FIS' military wing and allowing for the reintegration and amnesty of former armed Islamists, that was more of a police than a political measure.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the opportunities for political contestation increased during the mid-1990s. In 1995, all important opposition parties including the forbidden FIS and the former *parti unique*, the FLN (*Front de Libération Nationale*), agreed on a common platform that would have laid the foundations for democratization.²⁰ In 1997, two opposition parties were elected to parliament for the first time²¹ and two Islamist (semi-)opposition parties found themselves in the government coalition.²² The print media's reporting became increasingly free and more critical, economic interest lobbies from trade unions to

entrepreneurs gained influence throughout the 1990s, and a vocal protest movement was able to emerge and enforce election boycotts in an entire region (Kabylia) in 2002, despite repressive government measures. Moreover, domestic and international human rights organizations developed – at least up to the events of 11 September 2001 – a strong nuisance power and mobilized international public opinion, sending a strong deterring signal to Algeria's prime decision-makers. Finally, two younger and more reform-oriented elite generations pushed aside the revolutionary generation in parties, cabinet and state institutions with the exception of the army's central command and the presidency.

The dynamics of this re-liberalization phase, however, strongly differed from those between 1989 and 1991, and by 2004 had not transformed into democratization dynamics. Formal political institutions, such as the parliament or political parties, remained weak; political decisions were taken in opaque and informal ways; the judiciary was firmly under the grip of the executive; there were few signs of a truly independent organization of civil society actors; and democratic tendencies remained confined to a small number of dispersed activists in academia, politics and the print media, and to a few NGOs that had been active even during the years of strong repression (1992–5). The picture that emerged was full of contradictions. Not surprisingly, the transition literature classifies Algeria in this period in categories ranging from 'defect democracy' (Merkel and Puhle 1999: 265) to 'liberalized autocracy' (Brumberg and Diamond 2003). To move Algeria into the categories of diminished subtypes of democracy, i.e. to weigh the democratic aspects of the regime more heavily than the authoritarian, is quite audacious and focuses too strongly on the system's formal structures and appearances. 'Liberalized autocracy' and 'semi-authoritarianism' (Ottaway 2003) are terms better fitted to describe the limited and largely controlled pluralism, which Linz (2000: 159–61) considered to be one aspect of authoritarianism. If Algeria witnessed any transition after 1995, it has been a transition from one form of authoritarianism to another more pluralist and in the long run possibly more competitive one.²³

The fact that the actor-oriented transition approaches offer limited insight only into the factors that prevented liberalization from developing democratization dynamics in Algeria should, however, not be understood as a call for a return to structure-oriented theories of political change, such as Lipset's (1959). On the contrary, the empirical evidence from Latin America and Southern Europe (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Higley and Gunther 1992) and Eastern Europe (Przeworski 1991) suggests that transitions were ultimately the product of the choices of powerful actors. Political outcomes in the Arab world were also shaped to a large extent by strategies and agendas of politically relevant actors, as Perthes (2004b: 1) convincingly argued, but they were also influenced 'by global and regional structures and developments, and by constraints that limit the capabilities of individual states' (*ibid.*). The challenge for understanding the relationship between elites and political

change in Algeria thus consists not in subordinating elites to structures but in understanding how the two interact and what this means for elite choices.

2 Elites in theory

The obvious choice for approaching the question of elite choices, strategies and dynamics is the vast literature on (political) elites which can be divided into three waves. The first wave 'developed in early twentieth century European scholarship as an alternative to Marxist emphasis on class and as a corrective to the egalitarianism of democratic philosophy' (Zartman 1980: 1).²⁴ The second wave experienced a peak between the early 1950s and the mid-1970s and focused on elite composition and recruitment on the one hand, the establishment of causalities among the social backgrounds of elites, elite attitudes and political behaviour on the other hand. Finally, the most recent wave evolved in the context of 'democracy's third wave'²⁵ in the early 1990s and concentrated primarily on the role of elites in transition processes (e.g. Burton et al. 1992; Burton and Higley 2001; Higley and Moore 2001) – its adequacy for analysing the Algerian case has thus already been discussed above.

The two most influential elite theorists of the first wave, Mosca (1939) and Pareto (1963) argued that political power is distributed unequally and that society is divided into a small minority with significant political power – the elite²⁶ – and a large majority of the population with no political power. Democracy, the rule of a majority, was judged not to be compatible with socio-economic reality, and cultural superiority, superiority in skills or even in morality was attributed implicitly or explicitly to the governing elites. The main goal of these authors – to explain political system change or stability – be it through a focus on changes in the personnel of formal political institutions or through changes of relative influence of different groups in society – is still of great interest for contemporary research on elites. However, these authors' key assumptions about the elite being 'internally homogeneous', 'drawn from an exclusive segment of society' and 'essentially autonomous' (Putnam 1976: 4), and particularly Pareto's (1963) binary 'elite/non-elite' or 'elite/masses' concept lead the analysis of contemporary elites astray: among other things, they take the focus away from complex intra-elite struggles – a vital issue for understanding Algeria's political developments – and from the impact of social actors not necessarily defined as elites (e.g. the media, protest movements) on political decision-making. Not surprisingly, it proves difficult to apply these early elite theories derived from nineteenth-century Italy to the Algerian context at the end of the twentieth century.

2.1 Middle Eastern and North African elites in theory

The second wave of elite studies, conducted between the early 1950s and the early 1980s, was dominated by studies on elites in Western democracies,

notably elites in the United States of America.²⁷ But it also comprised a plethora of literature on elites in the newly independent states of the Middle East and North Africa in general,²⁸ and Algeria in particular.²⁹ These studies tended to be stronger in their empirical (and descriptive) than their theoretical (and analytical) dimensions, and they provided a vast amount of data on the first and, in some cases, second generation of elites in newly independent states of the post-colonial era. Their main focus was on social backgrounds and attitudes of elites, elite circulation and (elite) political culture, and they offered general hypothesis and predictions as to how elites were expected to change, and what these changes indicated for social change and the future development of the political systems in the countries examined.

An important theoretical contribution to come from this second wave is the notion that elites are not just a small and self-perpetuating group with a monopoly on political power but that there is 'the possibility of peaceful competition among a variety of would-be elite groups' (Lenczowski 1975: 4). Moreover, these approaches correctly predicted the rise of more competitive systems, born out of the need to absorb 'an oversupply of aspiring elites' (Zartman 1983: 31). As a result, elite interaction and intra-elite struggles received more attention than they had in previous elite studies. Of particular relevance for the Algerian case is Quandt's (1969: 10) seminal study of the Algerian early post-independence elite and his conclusion that the war of independence did not produce a united elite, contrary to common assumptions that 'mobilization against a common enemy will unite men who may have had few or even hostile relations previous to this experience' (*ibid.*).³⁰ Indeed, many of the struggles within the Algerian elite forty years after the country's independence went back to the factionalism which developed during the war of independence. Elite fragmentation – an outcome of both the historical, social and economic trajectory of Algeria and the deliberate strategies of the core elite – is, as will be demonstrated in the course of this study, a key variable for explaining the persistence of Algerian authoritarianism.

Another major contribution of these elite studies was their virtual abolishment of earlier dichotomous 'elite with much power/non-elite with no power' models. Weinbaum (1980: 154) softened elite/non-elite boundaries by introducing the term 'intermediating elites'. These elites were seen to present a mediating force between 'the nation's highest authoritative decision-makers and its mass publics', and to range 'from administrators to party agents' and to include 'traditional group leaders and other local influentials'.³¹ Other actors brought into the elite analysis were Zartman's (1980: 88) 'demand-bearing groups', collective political actors which did not necessarily need to have common social class ties but can also form along 'geopolitical', 'ideopolitical' or 'evipolitical' dimensions. The rise of such groups caused the realignment of demands by established groups, thus – at least indirectly – making demand-bearing groups influential political players.

Other concepts, such as factionalism and clientelism, reflected vertical rather than horizontal (class) segmentation and also to a certain extent dissolved boundaries between elites and non-elites. As Waterbury (1970) showed with regard to Morocco, vertical segmentation functioned as the basis of a political system. Overall, elite studies on the Arab world displayed an increasing focus on the types of linkages between elites and the types of relations they establish with the rest of society.³²

Although these studies made many advances, they do share a number of shortcomings, the most obvious one being that elites were viewed to a large extent through the prism of modernization theory, the dominant theoretical paradigm of the epoch, even if the studies on the Arab world did not fully subscribe to its teleology or to the idea of universal and fixed paths to modernization. But most of the research done in this era distinguished between 'modern' and 'traditional' elites and implicitly assumed that higher elite education levels and a 'modern (technocratic) elite habitus' would eventually bring political change. A second paradigm with a strong but indirect impact on this generation of elite research was Arab (socialist) nationalism, as propagated and practised in Nasser's Egypt and a decade later Boumedienne's Algeria. The combination of the elite scholars' modernization perspective with the objects of their research, Arab elites, who understood themselves as a modernizing force – albeit in a socialist-nationalist way rather than a Western capitalist one – had several consequences for these studies. Most importantly, they overemphasized change and neglected continuities. Elites were generally viewed either as emancipated from 'traditional' socio-cultural practices or as involved in a struggle between 'modern' and 'traditional' practices. Once traditionalism was abolished, it was assumed to be 'gone for good'.³³ Recent studies by Djerbal (1997) and Hachemaoui (2003) on parliamentary elections in Algeria, however, revealed a continuing importance and in some cases even strong resurgence of tribal loyalties and loyalties resulting from other affiliations that appeared to be traditional. These ties strongly reflected themselves both in elite recruitment and in elite strategies.

By clinging to a bipolar modern/traditional framework, this generation of elite studies tended to overlook hybrid forms of social and political organization, such as 'modern' re-inventions of 'traditional' structures and practices. Also, the long-term consequences of superimposing a 'modern' socialist-nationalist culture, as was done in Algeria, were hardly considered. This may explain why the majority of these elite studies ignored or underestimated the emergence of a new and powerful Islamist elite in the early 1980s.³⁴

A second shortcoming of the early elite studies on the Arab world – and one they share with the transition approaches discussed earlier – is the weak focus on two important clusters of structural factors. First, the specific nature of the economies in many Arab countries, and its effect on elite circulation and for the prospects of political system change; and second, the

impact of non-domestic factors on elite composition, dynamics and strategies. Algeria and other Arab countries such as Iraq were able to jump into modernity, at least in terms of technology, virtually overnight, thanks to increasing hydrocarbon revenues. At the same time the specific structural characteristics of oil economies turned these countries into what Luciani (1990), Beblawi (1990), Pawelka (1993) and others term rentier or allocation (versus production) states. In such states there is a strong dependence on a substantial external rent³⁵ – often, but not always, revenues from oil and gas exports – and the ruling elite's legitimacy and power largely rests on the ability to control and distribute this rent in order to secure loyalty and allegiance among the population.

In Algeria, the ability to control the hydrocarbon sector, the generator of 98 per cent of exports and 70 per cent of state revenues in 2004,³⁶ and to determine the destination of the hydrocarbon rent has been a principal source of core elite power since the times of Boumedienne (Benderra 2003). Struggles within the Algerian elite over the distribution of hydrocarbon rents and, since the 1980s, over new rents that came with market reforms – such as a certain deregulation of trade and privatization of state enterprises³⁷ – are central for understanding changes in elite composition and elite strategies vis-à-vis popular demands for political change. Taking into account rentier structures, moreover, points to the elite's dependence on yet another external factor: the volatile world economy. This was but one of several non-domestic variables with an impact on Arab elites in the past three decades. Other important external variables included the Arab–Israeli conflict and the Cold War with its geopolitical implications. However, most studies on Arab elites considered such external factors only indirectly (if at all), for instance by focusing on the attitudes of elites being educated abroad, or, like Quandt (1969), included consequences of the anti-colonial struggle on elite composition.

A third problematic aspect of early studies on Arab elites was the tendency to establish a causality between the social background of elites, the interests or attitudes that resulted from this (cf. Lenczowski 1975: 7) and elite behaviour with respect to political action.³⁸ Quandt (1969), using a more sophisticated variant of this, also departs from social background analysis but adds the variables of socialization and experiences, which he sees in a two-way causal interaction with values and attitudes. Values and attitudes in turn are also in a two-way causal relationship with political behaviour. Quandt – at least indirectly – also took account of context variables (war, for instance) by including their impact on values and attitudes as well as on socialization and experiences. The link between social background, experiences, socialization and attitudes is presented quite convincingly in Quandt (1969) and many other studies. But the insinuated link between these characteristics and political behaviour remains vague. Stone (1980) in his 'theoretical model with variables' rightly put question marks behind all arrows indicating such causalities.

The argument made here is that it is fairly easy, even if problematic, to detect simple and direct causalities between social background/socialization/experiences and values/attitudes but that it is not possible to establish direct and simple causalities between values/attitudes and political behaviour. As will be demonstrated, a reform-oriented attitude can only translate into reform-oriented action if the individual or collective actors in question do not have more to lose than to gain from acting in accordance with their beliefs.

3 Developing a framework for analysis

The above discussion of prior approaches to the study of elites reveals the multiple requirements of a framework suited for explaining the absence of profound political change, despite liberalization, through the prism of Algeria's elite. An approach that intends to overcome the shortcomings of earlier approaches must: (1) focus both on actors and on structures; (2) have a macro-political, a meso- and micro-sociological as well as an economic and historical dimension; (3) provide a dynamic rather than a static picture; and (4) take into account that there is a two-way causal relationship between elite behaviour and political transformation. Hence, what is needed is a systemic approach that takes into consideration the fact that elites are not an independent variable but one that depends on and strongly interacts with other variables. Such an approach has to acknowledge that elites and society cannot be treated as completely separate entities, that elites are embedded in socio-cultural and economic structures in different, specific ways, and that external factors have an impact on the elite.

The following is an attempt to build such a framework in a step-by-step approach, whereby each step sheds light from a different perspective on the elite and its interaction with non-elites as well as with structural factors. The sum of these perspectives will bring us closer to understanding how dynamics and changes in the Algerian elite interacted with the larger political, economic and social system these elites were part of in the period under examination (1995–2004) – a system *nota bene* which they not only shaped but which also shaped them.

3.1 Sketching the historic and formal institutional frame

It may seem self-evident, but it is nevertheless important to stress that the contemporary Algerian political system and its elite are the product of a specific historic trajectory, namely a long colonial rule, a war of independence that lasted almost a decade, the ensuing euphoria of nation- and state-building and, finally, the rude awakening to the legacies and difficulties of these protracted processes. Forty years after independence, elite composition, strategies and choices as well as dominant perceptions of political practices were still strongly influenced by these experiences. This study

chooses independence in 1962 as a baseline for a brief historic outline of the shaping of the institutional and ideological pillars of the Algerian system and its elites. Despite the substantial changes the system appeared to have undergone as of 1989, these pillars, or at least the remnants of them, remained central for understanding political action in the period examined in this study. Obviously, brief references to historic processes predating independence are inevitable in cases where understanding of a specific issue requires examination of events further back in time, i.e. dominant perceptions of the role of violence in political processes or elite networks stemming from the war. The approach to Algeria's history will remain selective since the primary aim of the historic outline is 'merely' to provide some foundations for understanding the relationship between contemporary elites and liberalization dynamics.

3.2 Conceptualizing the elite in circles of influence

A second step of this study seeks to analyse the impact of elite composition and changes in the intra-elite balance of power on liberalization dynamics. This requires identification of the actors constituting the contemporary politically relevant elite (PRE), the relative power of the different actors, and factors external to the elite with an influence on elite composition and on decision-making dynamics within the elite. A positional or functional approach is not enough to identify politically relevant actors in Algeria. Neither hierarchies nor membership in certain formal political institutions are reliable indicators of an actor's power. Organizational charts of state institutions are of little use for determining individual or collective elite clout in a system in which the governor of Algiers, an informal adviser to the president, the head of the prime minister's cabinet or business elites at times wield more influence on strategic decisions of national relevance than the prime minister and/or the entire cabinet.

The methodological challenge of assessing the relative power of actors is tackled in this study by using influence on decision-making on strategic issues of national relevance as the main criterion for belonging to the politically relevant elite. The same criterion is applied to determine the relative and approximate position of actors within the PRE. The strategic issues chosen as the indicator for political relevance are three (clusters of) issues that not only dominated the public discourse and were highly contested in the period under examination, but that could be considered vital for the Algerian trajectory – political, economic and social – in the coming decades. These issues are: (1) democratization, and here namely the question of increased participation, i.e. admitting all non-violent political actors into the formal political arena, moving towards more representative and accountable political institutions, and stronger separation of powers; (2) market reforms, primarily privatization of both the hydrocarbon and the non-hydrocarbon sectors; and (3) education sector reform, which touches upon the underlying

sensitive question of ‘national identity’ in a highly divided multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society. Those actors that can influence the course of decision-making on one or more of these three clusters of issues are considered politically relevant. Since all politically relevant actors as of the mid-1990s, and even more so during Bouteflika’s first term (1999–2004), had a stake in at least one of these issues, this way of proceeding allows for identifying the entire spectrum of members of the PRE in this period.

Obviously, not all politically relevant actors had equal influence. Their different respective influence can be visualized in a ‘model’ of three concentric and permeable circles that comprise the PRE at a given point in time (see Figure II.1).³⁹ Those with broad individual or collective decision-making power on all the above strategic issues, the prime decision-makers or core elite, belong to the first, innermost circle. The second circle includes those actors with limited decision-making power but strong advisory power. Together with the core elite, actors in the second circle constitute the governing elite – the exceptions are contesting actors that at times wield enough influence to be included, at least temporarily, in the second circle. The third, outermost circle, finally, comprises those elites with indirect and often only temporary influence on decision-making qua advisory, veto, bargaining or nuisance

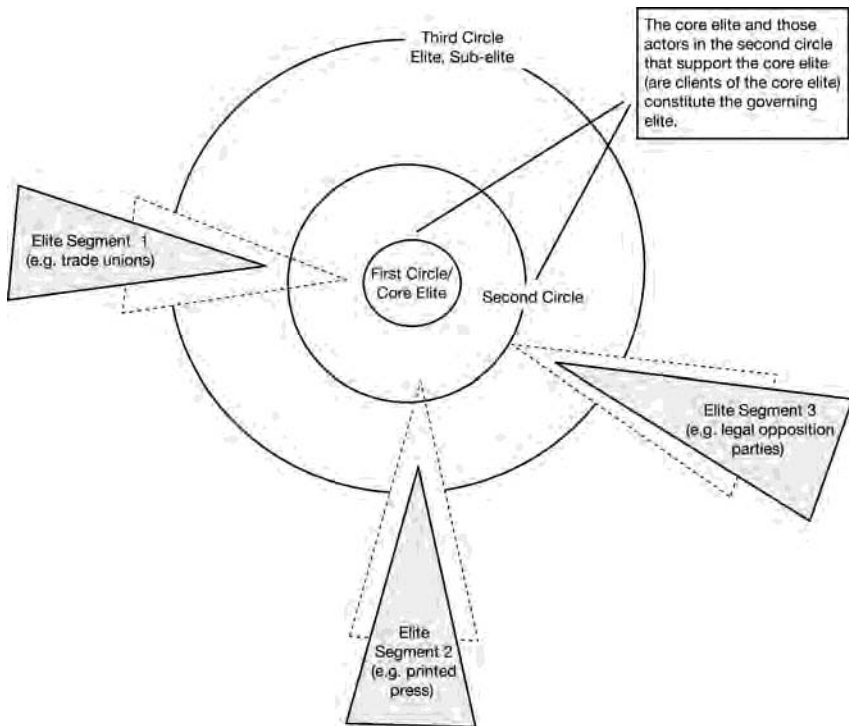


Figure II.1 Conceptualizing the politically relevant elite in circles.

power.⁴⁰ The main advantage of placing all relevant actors – regardless of their outlooks – in these three circles is that it takes into account that both governing elites and those contesting their rule – that is, contesting elites – are part of the same overall system and are subject to the same structural factors, even if they react to them in different specific ways. Moreover, it allows for ‘temporary elites’, elites that wield enough influence to be counted in the PRE during a certain period of time – human rights elites are a case in point – to be included in overall elite composition and dynamics.

This approach also posed a number of methodological challenges in the course of the research. With all strategic issues discussed fairly openly (and even aggressively) in the Algerian print media, third circle elites could be located fairly easily. The same was true, even if to a somewhat lesser extent, for second circle elites (for instance, cabinet members). But the closer one came to the actual decision-making centre, the more difficult the assessment of influence over decision-making became. Which of the Algerian generals had most leverage and what the president’s real decision-making powers were remained foggy and subject to rumours. Hence, the approach relied on most heavily to identify both the core elite and those second circle elites not in formal positions (such as unofficial presidential advisers) was a reputational approach, i.e. reliance on information on these elites and on their influence given by a third party – for instance, ex-core elite members, the printed press or high-level diplomats with direct access to core elites. In a number of cases the question of whether an individual belonged to the core elite or the second circle remained open. This problem, however, had negligible consequences, since clear intra-elite dynamics were discernable even without precise identification in all cases of individual levels of influence.

The conceptualizing of the Algerian PRE in terms of relative influence on strategic issues – beyond reflecting elite composition at a given point in time – is an important heuristic tool for understanding how elite dynamics and political liberalization interact. Visualizing the elite in the three circles over a period of time allows for determining changes in relative influence of the different actors. Shifts in elite composition, such as an increase in number of actors in the third and second circles, can indicate changes in the margin of action of the core elite and growing pressure for concessions. Determining why an individual or collective actor is influential, how this fluctuates and at what times, points to factors external to the elite with an impact on elite composition, strategies and choices and thus – even if indirectly – on liberalization dynamics. Moreover, it reveals specific constellations of factors, ‘opportunity structures’ (McAdam et al. 1996: 2–3),⁴¹ that facilitate the emergence of new demand-bearing groups and thus of new potentially politically relevant actors.

Finally, the three circle model of relative influence is a useful tool for analysis not necessarily because of the questions it answers but because of those it raises. The stakes different Algerian actors held in the various strategic issues, for instance, pointed to complex cross-cutting intra-elite

conflict lines and an enormous elite fragmentation, and raised the question of the probability or improbability of alliances and pacts. Decreases in the core elite's range of manoeuvre, moreover, begged the question of how the core elite tried to contain undesired liberalization side-effects and keep contesters at bay, and what factors supported or undermined these core elite efforts. The appearance of new actors in the elite, moreover, raised the question of whether this meant that actors with different – possibly more reform-oriented – outlooks were emerging. Addressing these questions in a more profound way, however, required going beyond elite composition and dynamics and beyond the macro and meso levels of analysis.

3.3 Highlighting continuity and change in recruitment mechanisms and elite attitudes

Mannheim (1952: 200) pointed out that democracy was characterized among other things 'by a new mode of élite selection' and stressed the importance of elite selection by merit. A third step of analysis, which is a third perspective on the Algerian elite, therefore seeks to identify selection criteria for upward mobility of politically relevant actors and those aspiring to political relevance by focusing on the generational change within the elite. Moreover, it uses the generational change to analyse continuity and change in political outlooks of elites and to sketch the spectrum of elite types found in the new generation in order to assess whether they are reformers – the central actors of democratic transition. Generation is defined in this study in the Mannheimian (1952: 292) sense as 'a particular kind of identity of location, embracing related "age groups" embedded in a historical-social process'.

It is important to stress that a different generational experience produces a different 'generation entelechy' (Mannheim 1952: 309)⁴² – the case of the 1968 generation being a prominent and much studied example.⁴³ In Algeria, the generational issue was vital for understanding the nature of elite change and what this meant for transition, for two reasons. First, after decades of the revolutionary generation dominating political life, Algeria witnessed a profound generational change in many segments of its PRE in the 1990s. Second, clear-cut generations as well as generational conflict in the Algerian PRE are not just a construct of the political analyst but were being referred to and played an increasingly important role in Algerian political discourse. The main variables used in this study for delineating these generations are common historical experiences and common formal educational experiences.⁴⁴ These variables allow for distinguishing the following generations: the generation that fought what Algerians refer to as 'the revolution';⁴⁵ the generation that came of age after independence, termed the 'second generation' here; and the generation born around or after independence, termed the 'third generation'.⁴⁶ The third generation is of particular interest for this study because it was poised to move into key positions in the

early 2000s after having been blocked from such positions up to the late 1990s.

An actual generational change and an approach concentrating on it offer a chance to pinpoint areas of change and continuity both in elite outlooks and in recruitment mechanisms in a long-term perspective. A focus on the ways in which young elite generations are being included in the formal political system and on the limits they face to upward mobility reveals that not only persistence but also change in recruitment mechanisms can be indicators for the successful upholding of existing political structures. New patterns of entry into the PRE can, for instance, indicate that both the elites and the larger system in which they operate adapt to political and socio-economic change by creating a valve through inclusion/co-optation of new forces. Even though the primary focus of a generational approach is on values and agency, it can also prove insightful as to socio-economic and socio-cultural transformations. Differing formal educational experiences, for instance – one of the variables used to delineate generations – mirror demographic shifts, social transformations and socio-economic developments. Focusing on changes in political attitudes, strategies and choices from a generational perspective can, furthermore, give indications as to long-term changes in socio-culturally rooted perceptions and practices of politics.

Treating generations as separate but homogeneous entities does not, however, suffice for analysis. Deconstructing each generation into smaller units, into different elite types, is inevitable if the relationship between developments within the elite and liberalization dynamics is to be understood. As Mannheim (1952: 305–12) stressed, an ‘actual generation’ is divided into ‘differentiated, antagonistic generation units’ because common historical experiences are dealt with in different ways.

In Algeria the dominant discourse tends to reduce generation units to binary categories, such as *éradicateurs/réconciliateurs*, Arabophone/Francophone or Islamist/anti-Islamist. The explanatory power of such bipolar categories for the question of political change is limited, because by principally relying on one variable – e.g. language – complex cross-cutting cleavages as well as additional dimensions, such as outlooks on economic reforms, are ignored. This study will therefore employ a wider spectrum of variables. These include: background (socio-economic, linguistic, regional, ethnic); form and level of education; political socialization;⁴⁷ collective historical experiences;⁴⁸ perceptions of the country’s most urgent problems; suggested solutions for these problems; and voiced attitudes⁴⁹ vis-à-vis the above-mentioned three strategic issues – market and education sector reforms as well as democratization. The focus on these variables allows for the construction of a number of elite type categories. Since these categories are to a certain extent abstracted, they will be termed ‘elite ideal-types’.⁵⁰ Quandt (1969) constructed such categories for the pre-independence and early post-independence elites and described the shifts in balance of power between them. This study focuses primarily on ideal-types in the strongly

emerging third elite generation in order to highlight competing political projects and chances for, as well as impediments to, democratization. The construction of these ideal-types produces a number of different patterns of links between experiences, political socialization, socio-economic background on the one hand, and voiced beliefs and attitudes on the other hand. However, quoting Rustow (1970: 346): 'Not all causal links run from beliefs and attitudes to actions.' Reform-oriented attitudes do not necessarily need to translate into pro-reform choices. Establishing links between attitudes and political action is possible only to a limited extent and only through the inclusion of two additional clusters of variables with an impact on elite strategies and choices: social and economic networks of the various elite-types, and socio-cultural perceptions of political practices.

3.4 Bringing structures back in: economic and socio-cultural embeddedness of elites

Migdal (2001: 92) suggested that

if we are to understand the capabilities and characters of state leaders – their abilities to make the rules for their population and the degree to which politics of survival dominate over the agenda items – one must start with social structure.

Indeed, elite capabilities, strategies and choices are not simply a result of intra-elite dynamics or external factors with a direct impact on the elite or elite attitudes, but a result of challenges posed by the fact that elites are not detached from society but a part of it. Similarly, Chabal and Daloz (1999: 148) diagnosed for much of Africa that politics 'is not functionally differentiated, or separated, from the socio-cultural considerations which govern everyday life'. To a large extent this also holds true for political life in Algeria, where political structures and practices tended to reflect 'traditional' patriarchal and authoritarian social structures and practices or re-invented 'modern' versions of such structures and practices.⁵¹ Key to understanding actors' diverging choices are the multiple and specific ways in which the different elites are embedded in overlapping socio-cultural and economic structures and the different constraints, vested interests and opportunities that result from their respective embeddedness. These socio-cultural and economic constraints shape what Merkel and Puhle (1999: 11) termed the 'Handlungskorridor', i.e. the corridor of action, within which elites and masses in coalitions or conflicts decide over the outcome of a transition process and which is the outcome of the 'interplay between structural restrictions and political action' (ibid.).⁵² Since these restrictions are not identical for different elites the term 'corridor' is used in the plural here, to indicate that the overall corridor of action of the Algerian elite consists of multiple overlapping sub-corridors of action.

Step four of the analysis seeks to identify the main factors that shape these corridors of action and that are co-determinants of the trajectory of the liberalization process. A first cluster of such factors are dominant socio-cultural perceptions of how politics function and the resulting practices.⁵³ Whether elites fully share these perceptions, or merely cater to them is irrelevant, for in either case they influence their practices. Since it would be beyond the scope of this study to engage in an in-depth analysis of the entire spectrum of such perceptions, analysis of them is limited to perceptions of: (a) what constitutes desirable leadership; (b) who is considered responsible or accountable for political decisions; (c) what are considered to be the best means to achieve one's political goals and what role the symbolic weight of the revolution and the use of violence play among these means. In the absence of polls on these questions, (participant) observation of inner-party dynamics and election processes as well as qualitative interviews were the main methods used.⁵⁴

A second cluster of factors shaping elite corridors of action are the many overlapping social and economic networks and structures in which individual elites are embedded. One way of approaching the multiple ties of elites would be through network analysis. However, quantitative approaches to networks and the models resulting from these were not an option in the Algerian case because systematic data gathering was difficult during the period of research. This study thus uses the term 'networks' in a more metaphoric way and is primarily interested in identifying the nature of different 'webs of reciprocity' and their specific effects on elite corridors of action and thus on liberalization dynamics. This book does not aim at an in-depth analysis of such webs. Rather, it tries to understand their impact by using examples, for instance from election processes.

Many of these webs and the transactions taking place within them can be understood in terms of clientelism. Pawelka (2000: 396)⁵⁵ defines clientelism as 'a political relationship between socially unequal individuals or groups – patrons and clients – aimed at an exchange of various resources to the benefit of all parties'. Because patron–client relations effect a high degree of adaptability, they comprise both 'traditional' patterns of exchange as well as more recently developed patterns such as those reflected in the rentier structures of hydrocarbon economies. Patron–client relations reveal what is at stake for different members of the PRE in the case of political and economic reform. Moreover, what makes patron–client relations particularly relevant for analysis in this study is that 'they seem to undermine the horizontal group organization and solidarity of both clients and patrons but especially clients' (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1981: 276). This explains some obstacles to political pacts and elite settlement, and thus to transition.⁵⁶ Finally, patron–client relations show that social interactions involving elites often extend well into the 'the masses'. They thus shed light on the nature of links between elites and the wider population, and on how political change hinges upon overall socio-economic change, and vice versa.

Broadening the focus on elite ties beyond patron–client relations – however dominant they may be in the Algerian case – is vital for the understanding of elite strategies and choices. All members of the PRE have multiple ties – for instance belonging to a tribe, a revolutionary or regional network, and a religious brotherhood at the same time – which can result in conflicting loyalties and in paralysis of political decision-making or complex manoeuvring strategies. As Migdal (2001: 190–1) diagnosed, individuals must respond not only to the constraints and opportunities posed by one organization but to those posed by many. This produces a ‘fundamental lack of coherence in their [the individuals’] social worlds’ and can explain the paradox that Algerian elites make (status quo preserving) political choices which fundamentally contradict their attitudes, or that ‘ideal-types’ with radically different agendas end up making similar political choices. Last but not least, these choices are affected by increasing embeddedness of the Algerian elite in (multilateral) international structures (such as the Euro-Mediterranean partnership).

Analysis of how this multiple elite embeddedness affects liberalization dynamics thus supplements the earlier gained insights on the interaction between intra-elite dynamics, elite recruitment mechanisms, elite attitudes and political change. It gives a complex picture of the factors that structure the corridors within which elites make their choices, and allows for drawing a model of elite decision-making (cf. Figure II.2) that considers social background,

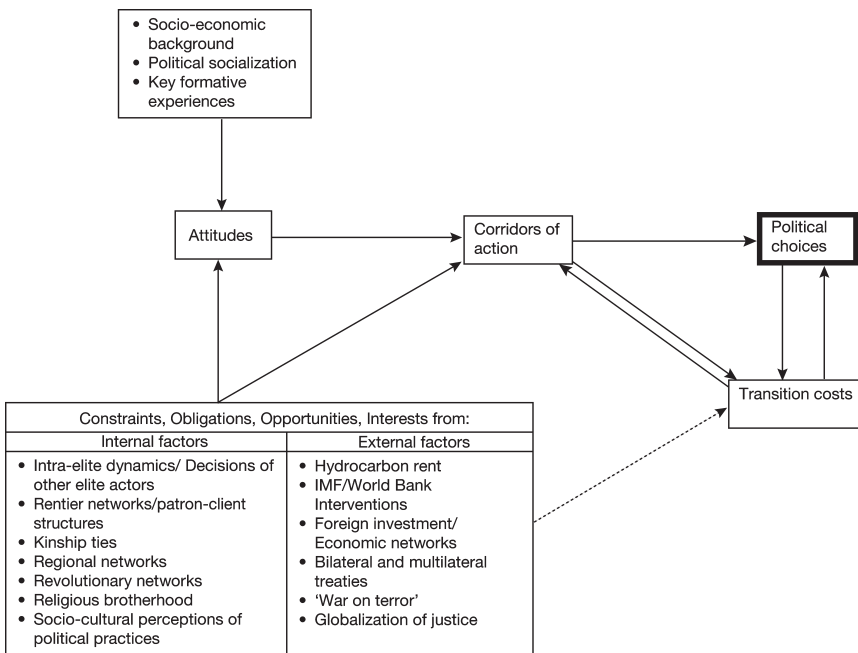


Figure II.2 Elite decision-making model.

political socialization and related attitudes to be but some of the factors relevant for understanding elite decision-making among a number of other factors which are generally more important. The complexity of factors with an impact on elite corridors of action to a certain extent devalues rational choice models of elite decision-making that in theory look very convincing. Though elites do indeed make choices based on how they think other elites will act, as Przeworski (1991) argued, assumptions about other actors' choices are only a part of the 'guidelines' in decision-making – decisions are to a large extent the outcome of pressures and obligations that are a product of the multiple embeddedness of actors. It is, moreover, hard to imagine that actors have the ability to predict which 'reflex' – the economic, the kinship, the regionalist, etc. – will prevail in decisions of their competitors. The model sketched here does not have the ambition to schematically and mechanistically predict how actors will decide; its main purpose is to point out the specific factors that have an impact on an actor's decisions. Many of the factors considered relevant for elite decision-making are also factors that explain resistance to political change beyond the elite.

3.5 *Analysing costs of change*

The above-outlined steps of analysis unravel a number of impediments to political change in general, and to political pacts that could redesign the rules of the political game in particular. Moreover, they uncover dynamics that are potentially destabilizing but that are counter-balanced by other dynamics that by themselves could also be a factor for instability. A final and fifth step of analysis thus seeks to categorize, weigh and discuss – based on the above analysis of the Algerian PRE from different perspectives – the factors that are seen to have prevented profound political changes in the period under examination. It also identifies a number of factors that could stimulate political change. One could argue that it is methodologically problematic to speak of what impedes transition, for it is difficult if not impossible to prove. This study seeks to circumvent this problem by pointing to specific forms of resistance to change.

Khan (1995: 79) introduced the concept of 'transition costs' in the context of economic transitions to describe the intensity and extent of resistance faced by those that want to change existing institutions to enhance economic performance.⁵⁷ Transition costs usually cannot be quantified (are thus often 'costs' in the metaphoric sense) and allow for a wide spectrum regarding the nature of the resistance to change. They occur when those defending the status quo (the potential losers) refuse the concept of compensation or when compensation is not offered at all.⁵⁸ This is particularly the case in rentier economies where incumbent elites and their clients have much to lose from an alteration of economic structures and distribution mechanisms. If we extend the concept of transition costs to change of political institutions, compensation of potential losers in the Algerian case can, for

instance, mean guarantees for prime decision-makers of exemption from legal pursuits after a political change. A further advantage of the concept of transition costs is that these costs not only measure actors' resistance and direct political costs faced by members of the PRE pushing for change of political institutions, but they also point to structural resistance that is mirrored in elites' choices. As the elite decision-making model developed in this study shows (cf. Figure II.2) transition costs also interact with elite choices and have an impact on elite corridors of action – the higher the costs, the less likely are potential forces of change to push the changes they deem necessary – thus raising again the costs of transition for those actors that are still pursuing change.

It is obvious that overall transition costs in Algeria were enormous. Yet, the above-outlined four steps of analysis also highlight factors that have led to certain political changes. Closer ties with NATO and Europe, the globalization of justice, or the emergence of new social forces as a result of the changing national and international context are just a few examples. A discussion of the circumstances under which the high transition costs could drop may finally give some clues on how likely political system change in Algeria is in the near and middle term. Finally, the nature of the transition costs in Algeria will also provide hints as to whether such a change would indeed imply a transition to democracy or whether it would entail a transition to something other than a democratic regime.

III The shaping of the Algerian political system and its elites

When Algeria was struck by a terrible earthquake in May 2003, newspaper headlines such as ‘Heureusement il y a l’armée!’ were widespread.¹ Several months later, voices in the Algerian press openly asked the army to intervene in politics when conflicts between President Bouteflika and his prime rival, Ali Benflis, in the upcoming elections threatened to turn violent.² Even if one took into consideration that much of the Algerian private press had financial backing and other support from army elites, the praising of the army by non-elites and elites alike and the wish for it to pursue an active role in politics reflected two things: first, the population’s low confidence in civil and political state institutions; and second, the state of a state in which one institution, the Armée Nationale Populaire (ANP), has been the backbone of the political system for four decades.

The strong role – both symbolic as well as real – of the army in the post-independence era goes back to the central role of its predecessor, the Armée de Libération Nationale (ALN), the military wing of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), during the eight-year war of liberation (1954–62). Both the FLN and the ALN successor ANP became two of the main pillars of the post-colonial one-party system, and both remained main constituents of the post single-party system. A third and fourth pillar of the post-colonial Algerian political system were the civil bureaucracy and the state-led economy, which were closely linked both formally and in practice. These four pillars could not be easily distinguished since they became increasingly intertwined, both on the level of personnel and in their competences and functions within the overall system. Moreover, the balance of power among these pillars and among their respective elites was by no means static. Rather, there was ongoing competition among as well as within these institutions, and their respective weight shifted in the three distinct political eras between 1962 and 1988: the Ben Bella years (1962–5), the Boumedienne years (1965–78), and the Bendjedid years prior to the political opening (1979–88). Overall, the Algerian system from independence through to 1988 united bureaucratic-authoritarian³ with (neo-)patrimonial features.⁴

The ideological glue of this system consisted of étatist, nationalist, revolutionary, socialist and collectivist elements.⁵ These provided the backdrop

for a social contract between the regime and the population, the latter accepting exclusion from political power in return for the regime taking care of its well-being – the regime's legitimacy thus from the beginning was based on distribution. The above ideology, reflected in the economic and social order, was not only an important discursive component of the Algerian state-building process but also one of 'official national identity'. The other main component forming this identity was drawn from the socio-cultural realm and entailed the reduction of a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and culturally diverse society to an Arab-Islamic one, with Islam as the state religion and Arabic as the official language.⁶

The goal of this chapter is to: (1) highlight the function and weight of the system's main pillars, and (2) understand what kind of an elite emerged after independence, in order to (3) provide the basis for analysis of elite and political system change in the 1990s.

1 The main pillars of the system 1962 to 1988

1.1 The army and its elites

In the era of Ahmed Ben Bella (1962–5),⁷ the question of whether the civil leadership would prevail over the military or vice versa was still open.⁸ The constitution of 1963 provided for a regime in which the party governed. The army (ANP) was to participate in political activities and in the construction of economic and political structures within the framework of the party. The reasons for the ANP's strong position from the outset of independence were manifold.⁹ But most importantly, the ANP, being the successor of the liberation army,¹⁰ had emerged as the institution with the strongest legitimacy from the war because it was widely seen as the spearhead of the revolution.¹¹ As Zartman (1972: 211–12) noted, politics in the first decade of independence were still revolutionary and the army was given the role of 'watchdog on the revolution' (ibid.) and the top-officer corps that of the 'guardian of the institutionalized state' (Zartman 1983: 7). The army did not relinquish the role of guardian: In 1992 – in view of what it termed 'the threat of Islamist theocracy'¹² – the ANP legitimized its coup d'état by presenting itself as the 'guardian of the republic', thus using terminology that evoked its historical legitimacy.¹³

The war of independence laid the foundation not only for army predominance in politics but also for some of the main characteristics of the post-war elite. It was in this era that the principle of collective leadership – still (or again) exercised fifty years later, even if informally and unofficially – was introduced. This form of leadership was from its beginnings in 1956 marked by intrigues that extended well into the post-war era and even served to explain some of the intra-elite conflicts many decades later. The revolutionary leadership was a coalition of actors with very different political visions – ranging from strongly religious to Marxist leanings – and was united in one point only: winning independence.

During the war the collective FLN leadership – because of internal competition and logistical difficulties – never developed much authority, thus increasingly laying decision-making power into the hands of the commanders of the six wilayaat (provinces), i.e. of a politico-military leadership (Harbi 1980, 2001; Yefsah 1994).¹⁴ Power struggles among the war-elite were not limited to those between armed resistance leaders and civilian/political leaders: the military resistance itself entailed complex internal tugs of war, such as those between the *maquisards* or *moudjahidine* (resistance fighters) in the interior of the country and the better-equipped and militarily more professional frontier army.¹⁵ Loyalties and networks that developed within these two competing groups as well as those formed within the different wilayaat laid the groundwork for regionalism, clanishness and clientelism within the ANP and remain important for understanding political dynamics and decision-making in contemporary Algeria. The same held true for loyalties stemming from common engagement of revolutionaries in the Ministère de l'Armement et des Liaisons Générales (MALG), the predecessor of the Sécurité Militaire (SM). The SM – the main intelligence service – was to become what many considered the most powerful force within the Algerian system. It not only controlled the population but became increasingly involved in the economy – dominating, among other things, foreign trade and financial relations – played a central role in nominating top functionaries, and became engaged in internal military struggles (Hidouci 1995: 40; Garçon and Affuzi 1998: 50).¹⁶ All in all, the struggle against the French colonizer did not produce a united elite but, as Quandt (1969: 2) so rightly pointed out, a divided one.

After the coup d'état¹⁷ against Ben Bella by his minister of defence, Houari Boumedienne, in June 1965, the army became involved in politics more directly. The constitution was suspended, the parliament dissolved and a Council of the Revolution established as the supreme political body controlling government.¹⁸ A third of the ministers had a military background and 'held' key ministries such as Foreign Affairs and Interior (Quandt 1969: 251). Army involvement in politics became institutionalized and in 1976 – at least indirectly – backed legally with the Charte Nationale and with the new constitution based on this charter.¹⁹ Direct military intervention in politics thus only became necessary when the control of the army or the 'revolutionary politics' were seen to be threatened.²⁰

With a firm grip on politics, the army could turn to strengthening its position as an independent institution '*au service du peuple*',²¹ and as a principal contributor to the Algerian socialist development project. While the ANP's image as the symbol of national unity and an integrating force – recruiting from all regions and social strata and offering channels for upward mobility – may have been correct regarding the conscription army's base, i.e. the regular soldiers, it was far from reality regarding the officer corps. First, a majority of officers came from urban petit-bourgeois and educated Francophone milieus.²² They were thus by no means representative

of a majority of Algerians. Moreover, wartime and regional loyalties remained prevalent in the higher echelons of the army. A majority of ANP officers had their origins in the east of the country, the so-called triangle of BTS (Batna, Tebessa, Souk Ahras).

After Boumedienne's early death it was the army leadership that in 1979 chose Colonel Chadli Bendjedid to become the new president; among the two likely candidates rejected was Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who went into exile and returned twenty years later to become president by grace of the army. With one colonel following another, power remained firmly in the grip of a small group of men with military backgrounds, though Chadli was not the strongman Boumedienne had been. Rivalries between different army clans and their clients in the administration intensified and regionalism increased (Rouadja 1994: 178ff.). Chadli was, moreover, under the influence of the military figures surrounding him, among them Larbi Belkheir, who in 2004 was still one of the prime decision-makers.

During the Chadli era the involvement of army and other state elites in the economy – both state-led and private, which strongly overlapped – that had existed since independence substantially increased.²³ This development was accelerated by economic liberalization steps in the early 1980s.²⁴ Also, the perceived and real power of army officers in all spheres increasingly put them in the position of mediating (or speeding up) the provision of certain state services – be they special medical services, furnishing a passport or influencing a judge. These practices changed little after the end of the *parti unique* system and were still ongoing in the early 2000s.²⁵

1.2 The party, its mass organizations and their elites

The wartime FLN had, as Roberts (1993: 117ff.) noted, been neither 'a political party in the proper sense of the word' nor simply an 'ordinary army'.²⁶ Rather it was 'a political movement fighting a revolutionary war for nationalist purposes which from the outset was at odds with all pre-existing political organizations in Algeria and determined to outflank and eliminate them' (ibid.: 118). Much of this outflanking and eliminating happened through absorption or, rather, the illusion of absorption, for the FLN at the time of independence was engulfed in fierce internal struggles based on conflicting visions regarding the project of state-building.²⁷ The vision that prevailed at the second FLN congress in Tripoli in 1962 and in the Charter of Algiers in 1964²⁸ foresaw an elite party which was supposed to guide the way along a socialist development path.

Under Boumedienne the FLN's role was reduced to that of an instrument of state leadership. From the times of Boumedienne to the end of the single-party system the FLN was no longer the driving force in legislating and designing policies but became an instrument for implementing (coherent) policies (Faath 1990: 105ff.). This implied turning the party into a force of mass mobilization and of control of (civil) society, not least through its mass

organizations that were inspired by those in Eastern European socialist one-party states and that functioned as transmission belts.

The single-party system contained five such organizations: the Organisation Nationale des Moudjahidine (ONM), the Union Nationale de la Jeunesse Algérienne (UNJA), the Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes (UNFA), the Union Nationale des Paysans Algériens (UNPA) and the Union Nationale des Travailleurs Algériens (UGTA).²⁹ In 1987 official figures put membership in these organizations at 4 million out of a total population of 24 million (Faath 1990: 128). FLN membership was a *sine qua non*, not only in these organizations but also in the professional organizations that fell under the umbrella of the Organisations Scientifiques, Culturelles et Professionnelles (OSCP). The main task of both the FLN and its satellites was to implement the (changing) consensus in the party leadership, to expand the regime's control over the population, and to prevent the emergence of autonomous political forces by channelling social struggles into corporatist structures. Indeed, the mass organizations exercised an auxiliary function to the police and the army in that they enlarged the latter's web of espionage (Leca and Vatin 1979: 77; Faath 1990: 129ff.; Rouadjia 1994: 211ff.).

Both the FLN and the mass organizations also presented an important channel for upward mobility within the system – a substantial number of cabinet members, MPs or top administrative officials in the early 2000s had been politically socialized in these organizations and had made their entire careers within them.³⁰ Of the roughly fifty individuals that Entelis (1983: 101) considered to constitute the core elite in 1980, ten were members of the FLN's Bureau Politique (BP). The other core elite members identified by Entelis were the Council of Ministers (partially overlapping with the BP), the general staff of the ANP, the commanders of the then five military regions and the president and executive council of the parliament, the Assemblée Populaire Nationale (APN). The fact that the APN's leadership was considered to belong to the core elite did not mean that the parliament, installed in 1976, had any legislative powers or control of the executive; it was mainly a showcase for what was sold as representation, participation or even democracy (Rouadjia 1994: 173ff.).

The FLN's rhetoric – aimed at homogenization of the political landscape and streamlining society – could barely cover up the political divergences among the party's top elites. During the war the FLN had been a reservoir for actors whose political backgrounds ranged from communist to religious, i.e. tied to the Association des Oulémas Réformistes de l'Algérie.³¹ After independence and throughout the single-party era three different factions within the party could be discerned: traditional/religious, socialist-baathist, and reformist (in the sense of economic reforms)³² – Abdelaziz Bouteflika was among the reformists later to become president. The relative weight of these factions within the system and the level of dissent among them changed over time. The socialists, who had been strong under Boumedienne,

lost out in the 1980s, both to traditionalists – who successfully pushed one of the most conservative family codes in the Arab world in 1984³³ – and to the economic reformers who became increasingly powerful. Struggles among these three functions within the FLN were still discernible in the early 2000s and manifested themselves in the difficulties the FLN experienced in coming to a united position regarding reforms in the education sector or in the state economy.

Dissent within the system manifested itself not only in struggles within the party but also in some of the mass organizations, namely the Union Nationale des Étudiants Algériens (UNEA). The UGTA – whose role it was, according to the 1976 Charte Nationale, to inspire a socialist work ethos and to further the workers' 'ideological training' – at times developed some nuisance power through protests and strikes. Also, members of the Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste (PAGS) – heir to the former communist party and the only party at times tolerated alongside the FLN – were elected to the UGTA leadership. Yet several waves of restructuring and the formal intertwining of the party and union leadership prevented it from developing a strong nuisance power (Entelis 1983: 100; Faath 1990: 129ff.). After the end of the single-party system, the UGTA acquired some independence and substantial bargaining and veto power. At the same time, though, it again fulfilled – even if in different ways – a similar function within the political system in that it contributed to preventing political change. This was even more pertinent in the case of the FLN, which experienced a crisis diminishing its popularity after 1989 but recovered quickly, and from the late 1990s onward again constituted the most important formal political force.

1.3 The bureaucracy and its elite

When the French withdrew from Algeria in 1962 they left a complex and potent bureaucratic apparatus behind that had been modelled after the French public administration but also had strongly integrated tribal allegiances.³⁴ After it was taken over by the Algerians it adopted features of socialist bureaucracies as a result of the country's increasing orientation towards socialism and its 'flirtation' with Eastern European states and their systems. The civil bureaucracy as well as the state-led economy became prime spaces for the forming and emergence of a new technocratic elite in the late 1960s, which included the professional military and pushed aside the moudjahidine (Quandt 1969; Zartman 1972: 213; Entelis 1983).

Though populist rhetoric stressed popular representation in the state and party apparatus, such representation remained a myth in the upper echelons of the bureaucracy.³⁵ Specific recruitment mechanisms kept the reservoir of potential recruits limited primarily to social segments already present in the colonial and wartime elite. An early post-war regulation that required government agencies to recruit at least 10 per cent of their personnel from among the anciens moudjahidine contributed to this situation. Moreover,

special regulations – for instance, demanding higher-education degrees for top positions in the bureaucracy – favoured individuals with an urban, educated, socio-economically privileged and Francophone background.³⁶ As a result, the newly emerging bureaucratic elite came mainly from three social groups (Roberts 1983: 109): the remnants of the old, mercantile bourgeoisie of pre-colonial Algeria that came from a small number of cities and towns; the old tribal nobility, both military and religious; and the detribalized peasantry which ‘through access to French education during the colonial period acquired the cultural prerequisites for subsequent upward mobility’ (ibid.). Both the language criterion and historical local elite status remained important factors for understanding elite reproduction mechanisms in the 1990s and early 2000s. Also, the *moudjahidine* status – which had been a criterion for entry into the political class in the 1960s but lost some of its importance in the 1970s and 1980s – has experienced a recent resurgence as a recruitment criterion, albeit in a modified version of hereditary historical legitimacy.

Despite its new and technocratic face, the Algerian bureaucracy before 1989 could not be reduced to its technocratic dimension. The enormous expansion of the state apparatus in the first decades of independence in combination with the fact that the state was the principal allocator of resources gave new life to traditional solidarities based on tribe, village, religious brotherhood, etc. (Roberts 1983: 106). Resulting ‘clannishness’ and factional struggles prevented the bureaucracy from functioning effectively. There was little recognition of or respect for the concept of disinterested public service and little co-ordination among the various branches and levels of the bureaucracy (ibid.: 98, 104). The civil administration became an instrument for self-enrichment for core elites and the high functionaries they protected.³⁷ Administrative action was largely determined by what Algerians call *piston*, i.e. good connections that stem from personal (familial, tribal, etc.) ties. The deficit of the Algerian bureaucracy, to quote Roberts (1983: 100–1), was not that it functioned in an ‘excessively bureaucratic’ manner, but rather ‘insufficiently so’. Developments within the public administration reflected that ‘the Algerian state is modernist’ but ‘not a modern state’, meaning that the country’s leadership was engaged in an ambitious transformation of the economy and – arguably – of society but that political and administrative practices were far from ‘modern’ in that they were not differentiated from social practices. The discrepancy between aspirations at transformation and practices that undermined such transformations remained a key factor for understanding the difficulties of democratization in Algeria in the 1990s and early 2000s.

1.4 The state-led economy and its elite

From the days of Boumedienne³⁸ onwards, the Algerian state economy has been key to understanding both the stability and instability of the Algerian system. Collective and individual regime strategies of survival manifested

themselves in the ways the state's resources and the state-led industry were managed and later liberalized. In the first decade after independence all major enterprises were nationalized – the most important sector of the economy, the hydrocarbon sector, was fully state-controlled by 1972. Boumedienne's goal was to build a centralist modern industrial state with a dirigiste economy.³⁹ The centrepiece of his programme for development was an ambitious import-substituting industrialization project, based on the so-called industries industrialisantes (industrializing industries).⁴⁰ All non-industrial sectors were neglected, particularly the agricultural sector. Thanks to a steady increase in hard currency from oil and gas exports,⁴¹ the Algerian state from the late 1960s and particularly during the 1970s was able to acquire advanced technology for nationalized enterprises. The criteria according to which the central planners authorized such projects were, however, economically 'irrational' and purely administrative.⁴² State-owned enterprises (SOEs), moreover, soon turned into social spaces rather than economic ones, in the sense that their primary activity often was not production but exchange (of favours) and social accommodation, and that they were firmly embedded in patron–client networks of the public administration (Liabès 1989: 219ff.) – vested interests resulting from this embeddedness were a factor that in the 1990s and early 2000s presented a major obstacle to restructuring or privatization of these enterprises (Werenfels 2002a: 12–16).

The planned economy led to the emergence of a small stratum of technocrats who administrated the means of production, i.e. a 'Staatsklasse' (state class, Elsenhans 1984), and who switched back and forth between cabinet posts, the top echelons of the civil administration, and the management of SOEs.⁴³ The mentality that developed among those running the public sector in general and the SOEs in particular was what Harbi (1992: 201) termed 'stealing from the state is not stealing'. However, those who profited materially from SOEs by far exceeded this narrow stratum and their clients. As Hidouci (1995: 149ff.) demonstrated, the economic spirit of informality and illegality spread to low-level functionaries and small entrepreneurs who all sought to have access to state funds.

Excluding the hydrocarbon sector, the state economy was neither efficient, productive – output in most plants in the 1980s was running at 40 per cent of capacity – nor profitable (Entelis 1986: 125; Dahmani 1999: 35). Nevertheless, the SOEs were – at least in the Boumedienne era – an important factor for system stability. They presented one way for rent allocation to a substantial number of Algerians. Moreover, being framed as symbols of national sovereignty and as a space around which the étatist, socialist, populist and collectivist *imaginaire* crystallized (Liabès 1989: 219ff.), they were central for national identity-building and for promotion of the new state ideology. SOEs thus were an important tool for uniting what Elsenhans (1984: 144ff.) called the two poles between which state classes in the Third World manoeuvred: *Selbstprivilegierung* (self-privileging) and *Legitimationszwang* (need for legitimization).

In the Chadli Bendjedid era, the failure of the industrialization project with all its implications could no longer be ignored. Hyper-urbanization, rising unemployment in both rural and urban areas, and the increasing dependence on food imports due to the neglect of the agricultural sector in the Boumedienne years became problems that needed to be addressed if social calm was to be maintained in the long run. Chadli's response was to restructure the state industries and to promote the private sector⁴⁴ in what Dillman (2000: 44) described as a new regime strategy to regain political support by encouraging consumption. As it turned out, each of the economic reform steps opened up new rent-seeking opportunities for the bureaucratic, political, military and ex-military elites (Rouadja 1994).⁴⁵ At the same time, these reforms promoted the emergence of a parallel market which was fuelled by the subsidized public market and by a restricted legal private market (Dillman 2000: 11).

Chadli's selective and limited reform efforts failed to revive the public economy. In the 1980s, moreover, the oil price fell from \$40 per barrel in 1981 to \$7 per barrel in 1986. This accelerated the macro-economic crisis as well as the socio-economic problems. Foreign exchange reserves melted away, import growth rates slipped into negative double digits, subsidies for SOEs as well as for social programmes had to be cut, unemployment soared and the housing shortage became acute (Dahmani 1999: 83ff).

2 The political opening 1989 to 1991

What the Algerian core elite embarked on in 1989 was without precedent in the Arab world. It initiated not only a political and economic liberalization process but also what looked like the beginning of a promising democratization process. The immediate trigger of the political opening were youth riots that started in Algiers on 5 October 1988, spreading to other large cities, and lasting for close to a week. The initial reaction of the security forces was to brutally quash the uprising, killing more than 500 youths.⁴⁶ In a speech to the nation on the evening of 10 October, President Chadli promised to initiate political reforms; two days later he announced a referendum on constitutional amendments. The reason Chadli – who was re-elected for a third term in December 1988 in a vote in which he was the only candidate – moved ahead with reforms rather than installing a more repressive regime lay in three developments that preceded the riots and that could no longer be contained through coercive measures alone: (1) popular dissatisfaction resulting from the quickly deteriorating socio-economic situation; (2) long-standing and increasing pressure for more political participation and broader representation, coming mainly from Islamist, left-wing and Berber activists; and (3) widening conflicts within the core elite over how to deal with these challenges.

With the deteriorating economic situation the regime could no longer legitimize its rule and appease the population through the distribution of

funds and provision of services. It also faced the consequences of not accepting cultural pluralism and of monopolizing the right to define what role Islam should play in the country's political and social order. As of 1976, Islam had been anchored in the constitution as 'la religion de l'État'.⁴⁷ What this implied for law-making was subject to interpretation by the core elite and was controversial – as Roberts (1983: 103) put it, official Islam became 'the cult of the will of the government'. Outside of this official Islam a 'contesting Islam' developed among those religious forces – Oulémas and others – which had been sidelined in the later years of the revolution. From the early days of independence, a part of Algeria's religious elite opposed the new system and its governing elites. But only in the 1970s did these contesters start to find a larger following and to publicly clash with radical left-wing and Berber activists who, ironically, were also contesting the system.⁴⁸ During the 1980s, the figures that were to dominate the politicized religious landscape in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s emerged publicly.⁴⁹ Their semi-clandestine political activity and increasing popularity was a main reason for the official discourse slowly changing from socialist to religious in the Chadli era and for concessions to conservative and Islamist elites made in the 1984 code de la famille. Efforts to accommodate the Islamist leaders came too late, however, and Islamist youth were among those engaged in the rioting in 1988.

Opposition to the regime in 1988 also came from two other groups that partly overlapped: left-wing radicals and Kabyle Berber activists. The former were tolerated or even encouraged at times – specifically in the 1970s – in the hope that they would weaken Islamic tendencies, but were repressed in the 1980s when concessions to the increasingly influential religious forces were made. Kabyle Berbers, on the other hand, had constituted a hotbed for secular and left-wing resistance to the new system and its elites since independence.⁵⁰ In 1980, for the first time in the history of independent Algeria, a strong social movement emerged in Kabylia and in Algiers, and activists clashed with the authorities for weeks in the so-called Berber Spring. The Kabyles primarily demonstrated against the suppression of Berber identity – even just the use of the Berber alphabet was punishable – but also made demands for democracy (Faath 1990: 251ff.; Chaker 1998: 50ff.).

The core elite throughout the 1980s became increasingly divided over how to deal with these various opponents, and their demands for more political participation and for different cultural and social projects as well as over the role of the state in the economy.⁵¹ Economic reformers who had gathered in the presidency around Chadli's adviser Mouloud Hamrouche also generally favoured political reforms, arguing that economic reforms would remain blocked unless the monolithic political system opened up to a certain degree (Dahmani 1999: 119ff.). While party and administrative elites largely remained hostile to such reforms, army elites that were undergoing a changing of guard at the time were more open to such ideas (ibid.). The 1988 uprisings gave Chadli, who himself supported both (limited) political

and economic reforms, the needed leverage to quickly move ahead with the reforms and bypass the hardliners.

2.1 *System changes*

In February 1989 a new Algerian constitution, accepted in a popular referendum, laid the foundations for political system change and for economic liberalization. All references to socialism disappeared from the constitution. This enabled Mouloud Hamrouche, who became prime minister in September 1989, to introduce political reforms and transform the Algerian state economy to a market economy. Prices were largely but not completely deregulated, foreign trade was de-monopolized, the banking sector was opened to foreign banks and the Central Bank was granted autonomy from politics and the civil administration. The most profound political changes were the right to form political associations and parties, the guarantee of freedom of conscience and opinion, and the guarantee of basic human rights and of individual and collective freedom. This new constitution ended the single-party era *de jure* and opened the way for a plethora of new laws in 1989 and 1990, accepted – often after much opposition and in watered-down versions – by the Assemblée Populaire Nationale (APN) which had not been dissolved after the formal end of the single-party system. *De facto*, the single-party system thus existed until the first communal multi-party elections in 1990.

Although the new constitution was a huge leap from that of 1976 and announced a profound system change, it contained a number of articles that presented obstacles to democratization. The main problem was that the separation of powers remained extremely weak. The parliament had only limited means to control the decisions of the president, who was given extensive powers. The judiciary was to a large extent under the authority of the president. The president headed the constitutional council (Conseil Constitutionnel), which was supposed to supervise adherence to the constitution, and appointed a third of its members. Moreover, he presided over the high council of justice (Conseil Supérieure de la Magistrature), which appointed all judges and supervised them. Finally, the president also chaired a newly founded high council of security (Haut Conseil de Sécurité) whose composition and modalities of functioning were entirely in the hands of the president – who, *nota bene*, since 1965 had always been an army officer.

Though the new constitution reduced the role of the army to that of safeguarding national independence and defending national sovereignty, the army interpreted its new role also as that of the guardian of the democratization process. This meant that it did not place itself outside of politics but above politics, as Faath (1990: 154–5) pointed out. As a direct consequence of the new role ascribed to it, the general command pulled back its representatives from the Comité Central of the FLN – however, not from its Bureau Politique.⁵² The army's willingness to largely retreat from formal politics

went back primarily to a major changing of the guard in its top echelons that started in the late 1980s and was completed by the late 1990s. This changing of the guard, however, took place entirely within the revolutionary generation and led to the ascendance of the so-called professionals,⁵³ i.e. officers who had been trained in the French army before deserting to the ALN. These officers were seen as ‘technicians’, in contrast to their predecessors who had fought the revolution from the start and had not received professional military training, and were therefore perceived as politicians (Faath 1990: 155–6). Ironically it was precisely these technicians who were to become as, if not more, deeply involved in the political fate of Algeria in the 1990s and who in effect autocratically ruled the country for nearly a decade.

2.2 The emergence of new politically relevant actors

Even if the new constitution was, as Ruf (1997: 79), Hasel (2002) and many others argued, merely the attempt of a ruling anti-democratic elite to further secure its rule, it paved the way for democratization dynamics. The broadening of political rights and civil liberties completely transformed Algeria’s political landscape almost overnight. The number of parties jumped to over thirty within a few months after the new party law was passed in July 1989. The number of newspapers rose from 37 to 137 from 1990 to 1992 (Entelis 1992: 57).⁵⁴ Also, the number of associations founded – among them human rights and women’s rights groups – was in the hundreds, if not thousands (ibid.: 56). Obviously not all of these actors constituted new political forces and/or were independent of the former regime and its elites. Many of the parties, for instance, were merely vehicles for ‘one-man bands’ of prominent revolutionaries and/or elites who had been ejected from the system at one point or another and were looking for a comeback.⁵⁵

Yet the rise of the FIS proved that truly independent actors were indeed able to emerge. In September 1989 the Islamist party was officially recognized, despite the fact that its goals and platform could have been interpreted as contradicting the law on political associations⁵⁶ – an issue that later gave rise to speculations that the FIS was encouraged by Chadli and his entourage because they thought it was a force that could be used against hardliners in the FLN and/or to torpedo left-wing contesters.⁵⁷ The FIS pushed for the erection of an Islamic state – what this exactly implied remained unclear – and several of the party’s leaders made it clear that they viewed democratic rules of the political game as a means to come to power but one that would thereafter need to be abolished.⁵⁸ Yet the appeal of the FIS clearly transcended religious affiliations. One of the main points in its platform was market reforms, including lower taxes and incentives for private sector development. The provision of services of charities linked to the FIS, moreover, filled the vacuum left by the state – be it in the education or health sector. The FIS thus attracted the underprivileged, young and unemployed, and also appealed to all Algerians who did not directly profit

from the existing system and wished for economic and/or social reforms. This broadbased support was reflected in the first multi-party communal and regional elections that took place in 1990 – only ten months after the FIS was founded – in which the party won two-thirds of the seats in the regional parliaments, the Assemblées Populaires de Wilaya (APW), and close to two-thirds in the town councils, the Assemblées Populaires Communales (APC).

While the FIS was the only real competitor against the hegemony of the FLN and as of 1990 increasingly dominated the political scene, a number of other actors with more limited political influence – mainly nuisance or bargaining power – were also able to emerge. Prominent among these actors was the independent press, which immediately stepped into the role of watchdog over any infringements on the newly acquired civil liberties and political rights. Moreover, a number of newly founded business associations with ties to reform leaders in government sought to influence the course of economic and, to a lesser extent, of political and social reforms. What these actors – Islamists, business or press elites – had in common was that they did not simply appear out of nowhere in 1989 but had been dissenters within the system or, if operating outside the system, began to organize themselves years before the political opening. Moreover, most of these actors did not simply disappear after the coup d'état in 1992 but managed to maintain at least some of their former influence and/or gain it back in the second half of the 1990s.

3 The authoritarian backlash in 1992

In early 1992 the Algerian democratization process was interrupted *manu militari*. The immediate reason for this coup d'état was the victory of the FIS in the first round of the parliamentary elections on 26 December 1991. Projections for the second round of the poll gave the FIS more than a two-thirds majority in parliament and thus the potential legislative power to change the constitution.⁵⁹ This second round, however, never took place. On 11 January the Algerian president Chadli Bendjedid – pushed by a number of generals in the army's high command and in government – announced his resignation. Since the parliament had already been dissolved, the situation that presented itself was one not foreseen in the constitution. This allowed the army to step in without having to breach the constitution. On the contrary, the so-called *janvieristes*⁶⁰ could present themselves as the force defending the constitution by acting on behalf of the separation of state and religion. The abortion of the democratization process was, moreover, justified with 'the saving of democracy'.⁶¹ Reformers in the regime – taken aback by the unexpected power the FIS developed – either allied with hard-liners, or were gradually removed from the centres of power – the Hamrouche government had already been replaced before the elections in summer 1991.

The first political move of the new rulers – all of whom had been politically relevant before because they had been ministers, advisers to Chadli, or army representatives in the FLN's political bureau – was to install a new collective leadership body, the Haut Comité d'État (HCE), and to impose a state of emergency giving the authorities wide-ranging powers. The HCE, whose members either belonged to the *janvieristes* or were hand-picked by them, appointed the members of the Conseil Consultatif National (CCN) that was established in place of the parliament but that had advisory power only. After the CCN's dissolution, the Conseil National de Transition (CNT) became the quasi-parliament until 1997. In an effort to enhance the legitimacy of the HCE, the *janvieristes* chose Mohamed Boudiaf, one of the revolution's nine historic leaders who had been a moderate voice of opposition in exile, to preside over the new body.⁶² Only five months after his return to Algiers, Boudiaf was assassinated.⁶³ His successor, Ali Kafi, a prominent revolutionary, headed the HCE until it was dissolved and 'the generals' installed General Liamine Zeroual as president of the state⁶⁴ in January 1994. Three years after the coup, in 1995, Zeroual was formally elected president in multi-party elections that presented a first sign of a return to a constitutional political process.

While the years between 1992 and 1995 were marked by authoritarian rigor on the formal political level, developments on the ground took on the dimension of a civil war by 1994.⁶⁵ The coup d'état clearly ignited these developments, though tensions between the authorities and security forces on the one hand, and the FIS and its constituency on the other hand, had been building up since the election victory of the FIS in 1990. In spring 1991 a new election law, designed to disadvantage the FIS and guarantee an FLN victory, sparked clashes between FIS activists and the authorities which lasted throughout the summer. In June 1991, the FIS leaders Ali Belhadj and Abassi Madani, whose strategy had oscillated between negotiation and confrontation, were arrested. The real clampdown on Islamists, however, started in 1992, when thousands of Islamists were killed or put into detention camps. As a result, a number of mostly younger FIS leaders and their constituencies took to armed resistance. Repeated attempts between 1992 and 1995 by the military rulers to negotiate with imprisoned FIS leader Madani for an end to the violence failed; the regime refused to accept Madani's demands, which included the ANP's retreat from politics, representative political institutions, and compensation for victims of state violence.⁶⁶

While 1992 clearly marked the return to an authoritarian system there was no return to the status quo *ex ante*. Nevertheless, elite groups that had prevailed pre 1989 – be it the army, the mass organizations or the former *parti unique* – regained political influence or even came back to full power in the course of the 1990s. Three years of a political spring had not allowed for the seeds of liberalization – let alone democratization – to be rooted deeply

enough to prevent the return to authoritarianism. Conversely, these seeds could not be uprooted completely, and in the second half of the 1990s managed to sprout again – albeit in a more guided and selective liberalization process that developed a very different trajectory from that of the political opening.

IV The politically relevant elite 1995 to 2004

Structures, actors, dynamics

In the late 1990s, a popular Algerian perception of the country's elites was that they were to be found in Paris rather than in Algiers.¹ This perception, exaggerated as it may have been, pointed to two developments that crucially shaped the politically relevant elite (PRE) in the 1990s and that were at the same time shaped by the PRE: the civil war and economic liberalization. The civil war between the Algerian security forces and armed (Islamist) insurgents, which by 2004 had ebbed away to what could be described as intermediate armed conflict² in geographically isolated areas, led to a mass exodus of societal and political elites, primarily to France.³ Economic liberalization brought new (rent-seeking) opportunities in the 1980s and created a new business elite that emerged mainly from the military bureaucratic apparatus and commuted between high-security compounds in Algiers and luxury apartments in Paris. Not encapsulated in the 'Paris metaphor' were two further developments with a significant impact on the PRE: the Kabyle uprising that started in 2001 and that pushed new politically relevant actors to the national political stage; and the changing international environment, post Cold War and, a decade later, post 9/11, that pushed Algeria to reposition itself in the international arena. Finally, political system reforms, namely the return to constitutional institutions, initiated by the core elite, contributed to changing the face of the entire PRE including the core elite itself.

The first part of this chapter sketches the above domestic and international factors and processes that are central for understanding developments in the three circles of the PRE as of 1995. The second part analyses changes in PRE composition and strategies as well as changes in the balance of power within the PRE with a main focus on the first term of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika (April 1999 to April 2004). The goal of this chapter is to uncover core elite strategies, intra-elite dynamics and factors external to the elite that prevented liberalization in Algeria from developing democratization dynamics.

1 The political, economic, social and institutional setting

1.1 *The civil war*

Obviously the civil war – which reached a peak between 1994 and 1997 and left between 100,000 and 200,000 Algerians dead⁴ – had enormous repercussions on intra-PRE dynamics beyond elite exodus to France and other countries, and beyond the creation of high-security compounds that ‘territorialized’ and visualized the gap between regime elites and the rest of the population.⁵ As will be demonstrated below, the civil war led to fragmentation of the Islamists and enhanced splits within the incumbent elite over how to deal with the radical Islamist foe. It divided the core elite into so-called *éradicateurs*, hostile to compromise with the radical (armed) Islamists and in favour of their (physical) elimination, and the *réconciliateurs*, those ready to negotiate with the Islamists over a solution to the violence. In 1997 the latter prevailed and a secret cease-fire between the army and the military wing of the FIS, the Armée Islamique du Salut (AIS) was negotiated. In 1999, the law regarding the *Concorde civile* formalized the 1997 truce. This law – ratified by an overwhelming majority of the population in a referendum⁶ – was, however, more of a police measure and a legal solution than a political pact.⁷ An attempt made four years earlier in 1995 by all opposition parties including the FIS to reach a political solution to the conflict had failed. Mediated by the Sant’Egidio Catholic community in Rome, these parties had agreed on a common political platform of national reconciliation and democratic state-building that included the FIS. However, this so-called ‘Platform of Rome’ was immediately rejected by the Algerian core elite with the main argument that this constituted an outside intervention in intra-Algerian affairs.

As a result of the *Concorde civile*, the violence decreased substantially, though it still existed, even if on a comparatively low level, in 2004. Since the core elite derived much of its (still weak) domestic and international legitimacy from presenting itself as a bastion against terror, the opposition’s argument that the regime had no interest in containing the violence completely could not be easily dismissed. Indeed, a number of former officers of the Algerian security forces published books in which they argue that armed Islamist groups, such as the Groupement Islamique Armé (GIA), that were responsible for numerous massacres had been infiltrated and manipulated or even created by the security forces in order to discredit the Islamists and justify the army’s repressive measures.⁸

Therefore, the civil war also provided contesting actors – human rights activists, for instance – with increasing leverage to discredit the regime internationally. By implicating the core elite in the atrocities committed against civilians they not only threatened to discourage potential foreign economic partners but instigated a core elite fear of the internationalization of justice.⁹ General Khaled Nezzar’s having to flee from France overnight in spring 2001 after being threatened with torture charges seemed like a prelude to

such developments.¹⁰ The events of 9/11 and the ensuing international ‘war on terror’, however, reinstated the international legitimacy of the Algerian core elite to a large extent.

Apart from (further) fragmenting elite and society and affecting the international status of the Algerian rulers, the civil war also had an economic dimension with an impact on the PRE. Though the violence initially erupted over political control of state institutions and different projects for social and political order, it increasingly shifted to struggles over control of the economy and particularly the micro-economy, with both insurgent and incumbent elites having stakes in the latter (Martinez 2000: 94–111; Lowi 2005). The civil war also induced some structural changes to the Algerian economy and, vice versa, economic developments had an impact on the civil war. Violence against state enterprises, for instance, led to their dissolution and allowed new private entrepreneurs, in some cases coming from among or tied to the (Islamist) insurgents, to step into the breach (Martinez 2000: 122). Debt rescheduling, linked to an IMF-induced structural adjustment programme, saved the Algerian state from bankruptcy¹¹ and thus indirectly allowed the continuation of the costly military repression of the insurgents. Furthermore, it helped the core elite to hold on to power by enabling it to renew and uphold clientelist networks in which allegiances were bought through the distribution of rents and the conferring of economic ‘rights’, such as import and distribution licences.¹² It may be exaggerated to imply, as some authors have (e.g. Hasel 2002), that economic interests were the driving force of the civil war. Yet it is safe to say that the core elite’s fight against the FIS was just as much for holding on to privileges as it was against a radically different social project. Lowi (2005) convincingly argued that all parties in the civil war had economic gains from the violence and thus an interest in prolonging it.

1.2 Market reforms

Market liberalization had a direct influence on the PRE beyond its indirect effect on civil war dynamics. While there had been back-peddalling on economic reforms in 1992 and 1993,¹³ they returned to the agenda in 1994, when a stand-by agreement with the IMF was signed and foreign debt was rescheduled.¹⁴ Deregulation of food and agricultural distribution, trade liberalization and privatization were among the economic reforms with the strongest impact on the PRE. What appeared as liberalization was, however, in many sectors merely the conversion of public monopolies to private monopolies, creating a situation of oligopoly and Mafia-like structures, with ‘godfathers’ found in or close to the military-bureaucratic apparatus and, particularly, among former army officers.¹⁵ The involvement of the *Sécurité Militaire* and of current and retired regular army officers in the public and private, the formal and informal, sectors of the economy had been increasing since the 1980s and was indirectly encouraged by a generous early retirement regulation.¹⁶

The army's presence was particularly strong in the import sector. In the mid-1990s, it became common to refer to certain generals as '*le général du café*', '*le général du sucre*', '*le général du médicament*', etc.¹⁷ Towards the end of the decade more areas appeared to have been deregulated not only in theory but also in practice,¹⁸ but the main winners from economic liberalization were still found mainly among the core elite and its clients, and the fierce struggles for redistribution of rents between competing 'predatory clans' could not be termed free market competition. The core elite and its clients in the outer circles of the PRE thus profited from the specific conjunction of liberalization in some areas, such as trade, of state control in others, namely the banking sector, and of a legal system that was anything but separated from the executive and subject to corruption and outside intervention.¹⁹ Overall, the ways in which market reforms in Algeria were (not) implemented led to the erosion of the already weak boundaries among the military, political, bureaucratic and economic spheres, between public functions and private (sector) interests,²⁰ and between formal and informal economic structures.²¹

Despite the changes in many areas of the Algerian economy, one of its features remained virtually unchanged in the early 2000s: it continued to be a rentier economy, divided into a hydrocarbon sector, which in 2004 generated 70.9 per cent of state revenues and 97.9 per cent of export revenues, and the rest of the public economy which generally produced low or negative growth rates (cf. Annex Table 1). The state's energy giant Sonatrach could still be considered the backbone of the economy and a prime source for embezzlement and individual elites' enrichment.²² The distribution of the hydrocarbon rent, moreover, remained the main instrument for buying allegiances and keeping social calm. While new rent-seeking possibilities arose with market reforms and the emergence of a stronger private sector produced new patron–client networks, they co-existed with patterns of allocation stemming from the former single-party era. Funds and privileges, for instance, continued to be distributed through the former parti unique's mass organizations such as the veterans' organization Organisation Nationale des Moudjahidine (ONM).

1.3 The Kabyle uprising: the struggle over 'national identity' and over a social project

The Kabyle uprising, which started in April 2001,²³ affected the politically relevant elite in two ways: it parachuted new politically relevant actors belonging to a generation hitherto strongly under-represented in the PRE into the national political arena, and it forced the core elite to address the question of (official) national identity. It would, however, be inaccurate to interpret the Kabyle uprising merely in identity terms and as a response to (perceived) ethnic discrimination. In view of the large number of Kabyle-Berbers²⁴ in key political and military positions – several coelite members

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Duration of appointment</i>
Ahmed Ouyahia	Prime minister Secretary general Rassemblement National Démocratique (RND)	1996–8; and since 2003 Since 1999
Smail Hamdani	Prime minister	1998–9
Redha Malek (born in Batna but of Kabyle origin)	Member of HCE Prime minister	1992–3 1993–4
Belaïd Abdesselam	Prime minister	1992–3
Gen. Mohamed Mediène	Commander of intelligence services	Since 1993
Gen. Smail Lamari	Head of counterespionage	Since 1992
Gen. Saïd Bey	Commander of 5th military region	Since 1999
Gen. Abdelmadjid Taright	Commander of the navy	1988–97
Gen. Mohamed Touati	Military adviser to the president	Since 2000
Karim Yountès	Speaker, Assemblée Populaire Nationale	2002–4
Bachir Boumaza	President, Conseil de la Nation	1998–2001
Abdelmadjid Sidi Saïd	Leader, Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens (UGTA)	Since 1997

Table IV.1 Elites of Kabyle origin in key military and political positions.

plus the prime minister in 2003 (cf. Table IV.1) were Kabyles while only around 15 per cent of the overall population was Kabyle Berber – under-representation in state institutions was a myth.²⁵

Discontent thus was not an arithmetic issue of individual Kabyle representation in public functions but a result of a lack of political representation of the population, and of a specific conception of the state, and more generally of what Algerians called *la hogra*, meaning contempt (of the governing versus the governed), in Algerian dialect. Indeed, many of the fifteen demands made by the movement in the so-called ‘Platform of El Kseur’²⁶ addressed socio-economic or political mismanagement and grievances existing nationwide, and aimed at transforming the state. Nevertheless, the Algerian government largely managed to ‘ethnicize’ the unrest and thus limit it to the regional level. In doing this, however, the government had to acknowledge the identity dimension and make concessions on that level, notably a limited de-monopolization of the Arabic language.²⁷

Elite struggles over a new socio-cultural project after the demise of the official homogenizing national identity rhetoric had started before the end of the single-party era but became much fiercer with the political opening. They expressed themselves on two issues: the question of the state’s language policy and the question over the role of religion (i.e. Islam) in the state. Conflict lines in the very early 1990s appeared clear at first sight. On the one side, an Arabic-speaking (Algerian dialect), religious, increasingly impoverished majority of the population largely identified with the FIS. On the other side, a French-speaking secular elite and what was left of an urban Franco- and Berberophone middle class opposed the Islamists and defended republican and/or democratic values. Yet such a bipolar portrayal risked simplifying reality even in the heyday of the FIS, and the struggles over the Algerian social and political project in the late 1990s were much more nuanced and complex. Moderate, bilingual Islamists, coming from Berberophone backgrounds, for instance, sided with the French-speaking seculars against the FIS, and turned out to be politically more reform-oriented than conservative, anti-Islamist, Francophone ‘republicans’ within the FLN.²⁸

Closer examination of political demands sailing under the banner of values and identity often revealed struggles over power and resources. The Kabyle struggle for the official recognition of the Berber language Tamazight, for instance, could also be interpreted as a fight against the complete Arabization of the formerly French-speaking civil administration: the Kabyles, generally poor Arabic speakers, did not want to lose their very dominant position in the civil administration. Conversely, the Islamist *Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix* (MSP, formerly Hamas) in the early 2000s was fighting against the early introduction of French in the proposed education sector reform and tried to push English.²⁹ This was done not simply out of ideological reasons, i.e. to fight the Westernized so-called *Hizb Fransa*,³⁰ but also out of economic calculations. With foreign investors slowly moving back to Algeria and English becoming increasingly important in the private sector, command

of English presented a market niche not yet occupied by the French-speaking elite.

The role of religion in the state also remained a thorny issue throughout the period under examination. The state in the 1990s largely regained control of the mosques and tried to propagate a moderate and de-politicized Islam³¹ by overseeing the training of imams and controlling their speeches. Moreover, there were increasing efforts to reinvigorate a 'traditional' and popular form of Islam, the *zaouïas*,³² in an effort to build a barricade against 'imported' (i.e. Wahabi-style) Islam. The *zaouïas* also proved to be important for the mobilization of voters and thus were being courted by politicians. In order not to upset the Islamists or the large part of the Algerian population with strongly traditional values, no major decisions on religious issues were taken, apart from barring parties based on religion in the 1996 constitution. The highly controversial *code de la famille* – one of the more discriminatory regarding women's rights in the Arab world³³ – remained untouched, despite loud calls from women's activists and a secular party for its abrogation and regardless of President Bouteflika's election promises to change it. The struggles within the PRE over the role of Islam in the state crystallized around two issues in the early 2000s: the reform of the *code de la famille* and the reform of the education sector, the latter also being the main battleground for language policies. As was the case with economic reforms and the question of democratization, all politically relevant actors had a stake in these reforms.

1.4 Political system adjustments

The presidential elections of November 1995 marked the first step back to constitutional conformity and reflected the army's efforts to enhance the legitimacy of its rule. The sitting president and army candidate, Liamine Zeroual, won these elections, which were pluralistic – four candidates participated – and showed few irregularities.³⁴ One year later, several constitutional amendments were accepted in a popular referendum. The three main changes were: (1) the substantial enlargement of presidential prerogatives, and thus the erosion of the already weak separation of powers;³⁵ (2) the creation of a second (upper) parliamentary chamber, the Conseil de la Nation, a third of whose members were to be picked by the president; and (3) the prohibition of parties promoting religious, linguistic, racial, corporatist or regional platforms. In 1997, Algeria's first multi-party parliament was elected, albeit in elections that were strongly manipulated.³⁶ The big winner was the Rassemblement National pour la Démocratie (RND), founded by core and second circle elites only four months before the elections. However, these elections brought opposition parties into parliament for the first time (cf. Table IV.2).

In 1999, after President Zeroual's early resignation,³⁷ Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected – the other six presidential candidates had dropped out of the race because of unfair campaigning conditions. Three years later, in May 2002,

parliamentary elections again took place. This time they were marked by the comeback of the FLN that won a majority in parliament, and by the almost complete election boycott by an entire region, Kabylia.³⁸ And in April 2004, finally, Bouteflika was re-elected with an overwhelming 84.99 per cent of the vote.

At least on the formal political level, the Algerian government could claim a return to constitutional and formally democratic procedures by the late 1990s. In practice, however, democratization in 2004 – though a popular topic in the official rhetoric – remained a far cry from reality. Elections were characterized by significant irregularities,³⁹ several parties were not legalized, repression against contesting actors – be it human rights activists or the printed press – was ongoing, the state of emergency (*état d'urgence*) was still in place, and the military hierarchy continued to intervene informally and indirectly in decisions of the formal political institutions.

1.5 International treaties and rapprochements

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Empire were further factors crucial for understanding contemporary Algerian elite dynamics and the perspectives for political change. These international developments not only entailed the beginning of the demise of the Algerian socialist populist *imaginaire*, but also led to a strategic re-orientation of the formerly non-aligned state towards the US and the EU. Though the interruption of the 1992 elections and the ensuing civil war led Algeria into international isolation during much of the 1990s, the regime's efforts to regain international acceptance and legitimacy in the late 1990s through economic reforms, a return to constitutional institutions and strong rhetoric in support of democratization yielded positive results: in 2000, Algeria was invited to join

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seats 1997</i>	<i>Seats 2002</i>
FLN	62	199
RND	156	47
MRN	0	43
MSP	69	38
PT	4	21
Ennahda	34	1
FFS	20	Boycott
RCD	19	Boycott
Small parties	5	10
Independents	11	30
<i>Total</i>	<i>380</i>	<i>389</i>

Table IV.2 Distribution of seats in the APN 1997 and 2002

NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, and in April 2002 Algeria signed an association agreement with the EU. In 2004, negotiations for WTO membership appeared to be making progress. Furthermore, the events of 9/11 and the ensuing 'war on terror' had intensified co-operation between the United States and Algeria.⁴⁰ In summer 2003, the apparent establishment of a US listening station in the Sahara on Algerian territory became public, and in the autumn of 2003 there was talk in Algerian papers of the US also wanting to establish a regular military base in Algeria.⁴¹ Even if these were only rumours, the fact that they were reported in the papers – possibly as trial balloons by the core elite – and did not lead to a major public outcry showed how both elite and non-elite perceptions of the desirable Algerian role in the international arena had changed from pre-1989 non-aligned and pro-socialist positions. Moreover, France and the US exhibited strong strategic and economic interests and increasingly engaged in competition for influence in the Maghreb.⁴² This put Algerian elites in the comfortable position of being allowed to play countries vying to invest in Algeria's hydrocarbon sector off each other. But it also enhanced rifts in the elite, with different players seeking different foreign power bases.

The above developments opened up opportunities for some individual and collective politically relevant actors and foreclosed them for others. They affected the strategies of actors and changed the balance of power within and between the different circles of the politically relevant elite. Moreover, they pushed a number of strategic issues – privatization and education sector reform as well as democratization – to the top of the national political agenda. As a result, politically relevant actors struggled to decide or, at least, to influence these issues crucial for Algeria's trajectory in the short and medium run. The (temporary) policy outcomes of these struggles gave an indication of how much relative influence on decision-making processes different actors wielded.

2 The core elite: increasingly divided

Throughout the 1990s, only a handful of generals, in office or retired, made or had the ability to make strategic decisions of national relevance.⁴³ These generals either chose the president from their ranks (Liamine Zeroual in 1994), designated someone belonging to the old revolutionary guard (Mohamed Boudiaf in 1992, Ali Kafi in 1992), or in elections put all their weight behind one candidate from within the army (Zeroual in 1995) or from without (Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 1999).⁴⁴ To conclude from this that the core elite, with the exception of changes in presidents, remained static in composition, distribution of individual power, or strategies would, however, be wrong. At least two of the developments within the core elite in Bouteflika's first term seemed to herald the beginning of political change: first, the emergence of the president, or rather the presidency, as a separate power centre,⁴⁵ causing conflict and gridlock in decision-making among the core elite, and institutionalizing what appeared to be competition within the

regime; and second, a new army strategy *vis-à-vis* politics, or more precisely, army efforts to convey the notion of such a strategy.

2.1 *The composition of the core elite: last bastion of the revolutionary generation*

In 1999, at the time of Bouteflika's election, Algeria's prime decision-makers – *les décideurs or le pouvoir (réel)*⁴⁶ – were still generals without exception: the head of the army's general command since 1993, Mohamed Lamari; the head of intelligence since 1990, Mohamed 'Tewfik' Mediène; the number two man in army intelligence since 1992, Smail Lamari; the president's adviser for defence issues and unofficial spokesman of the generals, Mohamed Touati; and the director of the presidential cabinet, the retired general Larbi Belkheir. The last had been the strongman during Chadli's rule and in 2000 returned to the presidency as the powerful director of the presidential cabinet, an appointment seen as imposed on Bouteflika by the military.⁴⁷ Belkheir had been involved in the nomination of all other core elite members, which gave him much clout within this group.⁴⁸ Another retired general with incontestable prime decision-making capabilities throughout the 1990s, and seen as responsible for co-crowning presidents for almost a decade, Khaled Nezzar, no longer appeared to belong to the core elite towards the end of Bouteflika's first term.

Common historic experiences and similar trajectories strongly united these generals, for they all belonged to the same revolutionary generation.⁴⁹ They were born in the late 1930s, received their secondary education in French,⁵⁰ and in the mid-1950s embarked on careers in the French military. Since their desertion to the national liberation army only came late in the war, none of them had fought in the *maquis*. After independence they received military training at prestigious institutions, such as the École Supérieure de Guerre in Paris and the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow. In comparison to most of the revolutionaries who had run the army up to the 1990s, they were professional military.

According to ex-army insiders, a number of other generals with similar backgrounds, such as some of the commanders of the six military regions⁵¹ and the head of the Gendarmerie Nationale, also belonged to the core elite.⁵² However, these ex-army insiders could not even agree among themselves who exactly should be counted as a prime decision-maker. This had to do not least with the fact that decisions were taken in opaque, informal and consensus-oriented processes that were often lengthy because of diverging interests and struggles between factions and because of the absence of a (clearly discernable) *primus inter pares*. The choice of Bouteflika as the *décideurs'* presidential candidate in 1999, for instance, entailed drawn out, heated negotiations between Bouteflika's main backer Belkheir, a highly sceptical Nezzar and a number of other *décideurs*.⁵³ According to Mohamed Lamari, Bouteflika had been '*le choix le moins mauvais*'.⁵⁴

While it remained difficult to delineate the exact size of the core elite in Bouteflika's first term, ex-regime insiders⁵⁵ suggested that it consisted of no more than ten people, including primarily a number of active and retired generals as well as the president, and, arguably, his younger brother and adviser, Said.⁵⁶ Another prime protégé of the president, interior minister Mohamed Yazid Zerhouni, who commanded the Direction Générale de la Sûreté Nationale, the national police forces, had also developed substantial decision-making powers, not least because he commanded the entire regional and local administration, the most important apparatus in election times.⁵⁷ Hence, despite a widely perceived army dominance,⁵⁸ there was a slowly growing sense in 2003 that the military décideurs were neither able nor wanted to completely monopolize decision-making, either because they lacked expertise or interest, or because they encountered resistance. By 2003, voices in the press questioning the notion of the 'ANP *démiurge*' (i.e. the ANP as 'creator of the world') and declaring it '*un concept tellement dépassé*' (an extremely outdated concept) or accusing Algerians of making themselves hostages to the army, always looking for its benediction and thereby exaggerating its real power, had become quite frequent.⁵⁹ Even if one assumed that these voices were mouthpieces of generals trying to create a new image for themselves, they rightly singled out the fact that more than a handful of military figures plus Bouteflika were seeking to or could directly influence strategic decisions.

Additional actors with an input on decision-making were found primarily in the economic domain. In particular, those individuals in positions crucial for rent generation, distribution and redistribution could not be ignored. Among them were the commerce minister,⁶⁰ who headed the negotiations for World Trade Organization membership, and the energy and mines minister Chakib Khelil, who until spring 2002 also presided over the state's hydrocarbon empire, Sonatrach. Moreover, depending on the issue in question, the presidents of the two parliamentary chambers, certain presidential advisers (most of whom came from the president's region), party leaders, a few top cadres in the administration and in the largest state enterprises, and the powerful leader of the Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens (UGTA, Algeria's main labour union) were consulted on decisions related to the economy.

Prime ministers also belonged to this list of core elite 'consultants', because their influence on decision-making was generally only advisory. Indeed, both Ahmed Benbitour (prime minister from December 1999 to August 2000) and Ali Benflis (prime minister from August 2000 to May 2003) once out of office complained about the fact that they had been bypassed on key issues.⁶¹ Benflis, who was also secretary general of the FLN – the party's first leader not to belong to the revolutionary generation – and who led the party to its landslide victory in the 2002 parliamentary elections, by his own account could not make one nomination (not even of personal advisers) in his thirty-three months as prime minister. His justice reform proposals were not even considered in the ministerial round, he was not allowed to negotiate with the UGTA or the Kabyle coordinations, and

foreign policy was completely off limits to him; he made one single official visit abroad, to France. Yet Benflis did have enough political weight to warrant his firing by Bouteflika in May 2003. The reasons for this were not only publicly voiced objections to Bouteflika's reform plans but, more importantly, Benflis' own political ambitions. Even before he declared his candidacy he was widely perceived as a potential Bouteflika competitor and was backed by some generals.⁶² Benflis' successor, Ahmed Ouyahia, was given more leeway on both the issue of Kabylia and on economic reforms, presumably not only because he was a more audacious personality by nature than Benflis but also because he made it clear that he did not have presidential ambitions for 2004.

In view of the fact that prime ministers as well as those figures in the upper echelons of the political and civil administration cited above usually had (strong) advisory power but only limited or sectoral decision-making capacities, they belonged to the second circle of elites rather than to the inner, or first, circle (cf. Figure IV.1). Along with the core elite, they constituted the governing elite.

2.2 The new balance of power: emergence of a shrewd president

Though Bouteflika had been the army's candidate in the 1999 elections, he soon found himself in a tug-of-war with the general command which, along with part of the Algerian political establishment, was wary of his own strongly authoritarian ambitions.⁶³ One of the president's early moves was to broaden his power base by surrounding himself with almost thirty advisers,⁶⁴ most formally appointed, several, including his two brothers, informally present. With the formally nominated advisers having status equal to that of ministers and coming primarily from Tlemcen, Bouteflika's family's home province, it could be argued that the president formed a shadow cabinet, based on primordial (familial or regional) ties and consisting of some of his advisers and some members of the official cabinet.⁶⁵ The principal reason for Bouteflika's emergence as a powerful and (somewhat) independent actor and a décideur, however, was the fact that he was credited nationally and internationally with having put an end to much of the violence by armed (Islamist) groups and with having relieved Algeria of the international isolation that developed during the civil war.⁶⁶ Bouteflika concluded an association agreement with the European Union in 2001, and in the wake of 9/11 established close ties with the United States based on the 'war on terror', managing to obtain weapons that the US had withheld.⁶⁷ Overall Bouteflika managed to overcome what Martinez (2003: 17) so poignantly termed 'l'embargo moral'. This can be seen as a main reason for the army not being able to dispose of him despite increasing divergences.

Soon after Bouteflika's election, conflicts between the top echelon of the army and the president erupted over strategic appointments, such as the president's nominee for defence minister, that, after a fight of several months,

ended with the president conceding and instead keeping the portfolio for himself (as his predecessor had done).⁶⁸ In another conflict, over the nomination for secretary general of the defence ministry, Bouteflika prevailed. Also, in the early 2000s, the president initiated the largest reshuffling in the uppermost echelons of the army since the end of the *parti unique*. Four of the six commanders of military regions – among them protégés of Mohamed Lamari – were replaced. Yet, in a clear sign of the limits of Bouteflika's range of manoeuvre, the three key figures in the army's general command, Mediène and the two Lamaris, remained in their positions.

Rumours of conflicts between the army leadership and Bouteflika (and much of his entourage) became so widespread that in summer 2002 Mohamed Lamari publicly denied the allegations and reiterated the president's decision-making power. A few weeks after Lamari's statement, however, General Nezzar belied the alleged harmony and accused Bouteflika of having orchestrated a campaign – notably in the foreign media – against the generals.⁶⁹ Even if Nezzar at this point could no longer be considered a décideur, such contradictory statements pointed to conflicts between the president and the generals and also among factions within the army, namely the DRS (Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité), commanders of the regular army and retired generals who sought to hold on to their former influence, not least by going to the media.⁷⁰ Intra-core elite struggles manifested themselves primarily in the arena of the private press which was reputedly largely under the influence of certain generals and mostly hostile to the president. Bouteflika, Belkheir and their entourage were with increasing frequency accused of being in collusion with Islamists, embezzling state money and engaging in numerous illegal business dealings.⁷¹ The response by Bouteflika was the suspension of six newspapers for several weeks in late 2003.⁷²

While some of the points of contention between the different core elite factions were about political content – dealing with the uprisings in Kabylia and with the (legal and outlawed) Islamist parties – the main struggles were over economic policies, resources and/or simply power. Economic reforms proposed by Bouteflika, such as a new hydrocarbon bill⁷³ or the privatization of state-owned industries, threatened the vital interests of core elite, who commanded patronage networks built on the allocation of privileges and depending strongly on access to the hydrocarbon rent. The president's pushing for reforms was also not selfless: he tried to privilege his clients, as seemed to have been the case, for instance, with the allocation of the first private mobile phone licence.⁷⁴ As a result of the diverging vested interests within the core elite, the ambitious reform projects announced by Bouteflika – the reform of the administration, the judicial system, the education sector, the family law and the hydrocarbon sector – generally barely passed the stage of proposals or ended in complete cacophony with reforms implemented in incoherent bits and pieces.⁷⁵ Core elite conflict had clearly paralysed decision-making.

2.3 *The new army strategy: going Turkish?*

After a decade of controlling the state, in 2002 the army went to great lengths to publicly separate itself from politics and to create a new, ‘clean’ image for itself. In July 2002, for the first time in the history of independent Algeria, the head of the general command, Mohamed Lamari, faced uncensored questions in a press conference which lasted several hours. While journalists covered wide-ranging issues – from Lamari’s salary to the impending release of FIS leaders – the not-so-hidden agenda of the army was to play down its role in politics and to counter allegations that it had been involved in mass killings. The army admitted that it had decided on matters of national importance from 1992 to 1999 – in its eyes, to ‘save the republic’ from what it called ‘Islamist theocracy’ – but insisted that its political involvement had stopped with the election of Bouteflika. Lamari, in June 2003, even went so far as to say that the army would accept every choice made by the Algerian people even if it was Abdallah Djaballah (the leader of the Mouvement pour la Réforme Nationale, the most radical legal Islamist party).⁷⁶

Another important step in the army’s public relations campaign was an October 2002 international symposium on terrorism⁷⁷ at which several generals for the first time talked about the confrontations with the Islamists. They tried to justify the highly repressive army policies, whitewash the army’s tainted image and again deny their involvement in politics after 1999. This symposium marked a turning point in the army’s communication strategy. Not only did the speakers provide detailed figures on Islamist groups and information on the strategies of army and police forces fighting them, but the generals also mingled with Algerian journalists and foreign researchers and chatted with them over coffee during the breaks of this three-day symposium. In a less public but also highly significant move, in 2002 the army for the first time trained several dozen communication officers to become its voice to the outside world.⁷⁸

The army’s efforts to convey a new image and its stressing relentlessly that it no longer had political ambitions allowed for different interpretations. An optimistic interpretation suggested a more transparent relationship and stronger demarcation between the army and the executive, as in contemporary Turkey. Some Algerian commentators suggested that the generals wanted to retire without much ado, that they were simply getting old and exhausted and ready to abdicate in exchange for guarantees.⁷⁹ Yet even if the generals were intending to retire in the short or medium run and to retreat from politics for good, chances that they would be believed remained slim. The myth of the army *démiurge* was still so strong in public perception in 2003 that, as a political commentator noted, potential candidates in the presidential race knew that ‘without the argument that they have the army on their side, not even their wives would vote for them’.⁸⁰ Even the president appeared not to bank on the declared army retirement from king-making; he, as well as all

other candidates in the 2004 elections, relentlessly praised the army and stressed its role as ‘the backbone of the country’ and ‘our dearest thing’.⁸¹

At least as likely as reflecting an intention to completely retreat from politics, that is, a long-term strategic move, the army’s declarations were tactical and produced for both the domestic audience and the international community that demanded to see political reforms. One indication supporting such an interpretation was that the generals risked little in their much hailed neutrality in the 2004 presidential elections.⁸² The Islamist candidate was highly unlikely to be elected, and Bouteflika’s main rival, Benflis, came from within the system and appeared to be no serious threat to the generals,⁸³ although parts of his agenda – for example, enforcing good governance and strengthening the legal system – may in the long run have proven uncomfortable for some *décideurs*. What Rouquié (1986: 123) observed in the Latin American context – that military elites were prepared to accept (a certain) withdrawal from formal politics if the civil government that was likely to replace them was similar to their own policies or preferences – seemed true for Algeria as well. A real army retreat from politics would have involved not only neutrality in elections but also relinquishing continuous influence over individual politicians, future legislation on economic policies, and over the state hydrocarbon sector and rent-distribution networks. In early 2004, there were no clear indications that the generals intended to disengage from all these economic and political spheres. It seemed, moreover, unlikely that the generals would retreat without being assured exemption from future legal proceedings.

In autumn of 2003, as the confrontation between Benflis and Bouteflika intensified and distracted public attention from the country’s substantial real problems, speculations about a third possible army strategy surfaced in the media: the army was seen as wanting to produce chaos in order to be able to again directly intervene in politics and to do so with the backing of a despairing population.⁸⁴ Indeed, political figures in the press implicitly or explicitly started to ponder the idea of army intervention or, in some cases, even ask for it directly.⁸⁵ The outcome of the 2004 elections, from which Bouteflika emerged as a strong leader with an apparently large popular base, and the efforts to please the international community made this conspiratorial scenario highly unlikely, at least in the short run. What could be assumed safely, however, was that even the generals themselves had no coherent vision.

Regardless of which interpretation most adequately reflected the army’s intentions, the army had been pushed to change its image and seriously consider the domestic and international implications of its actions. These developments could be seen primarily as a reaction to the changing international climate. The army’s need for ex post justifications of its policies in the 1990s was a direct response to damage done to its international legitimacy by the *Qui tue qui?* media debate – the debate suggesting indirect or direct army responsibility in massacres officially attributed to Islamists – and by

devastating reports by international human rights organizations.⁸⁶ Algeria's growing ties with the EU and, particularly, NATO had compelled the army to put on a different face. Moreover, the events of 9/11 and the ensuing 'war on terror' encouraged the décideurs to vie for international sympathy by presenting the Algerian state and army as one of the early 'victims of international terrorism'.

3 The second circle of the elite: reproducing core elite divisions

The changes in core elite strategies and the shifting of the balance of power within the core elite towards the presidency also had clear repercussions on the composition of the second circle of the PRE and of the dynamics within it. This circle included actors with limited decision-making but strong advisory power. It was primarily a pool of important core elite clients in various state institutions and in the cabinet – the most important collective actor in the second circle – as well as in the public economic sector, in the private sector, and among regime-supporting civil society groups (cf. Figure IV.1). In rare instances contesting elites were also found in this circle, but their presence was usually only temporary, resulting from a passing political constellation during which they were able to mobilize public opinion to an extent that made them as influential as a minister, albeit in a different way. Some second circle elites – for instance, ministers – had high profiles and exercised official functions. Others, like Bouteflika's closest advisers, a

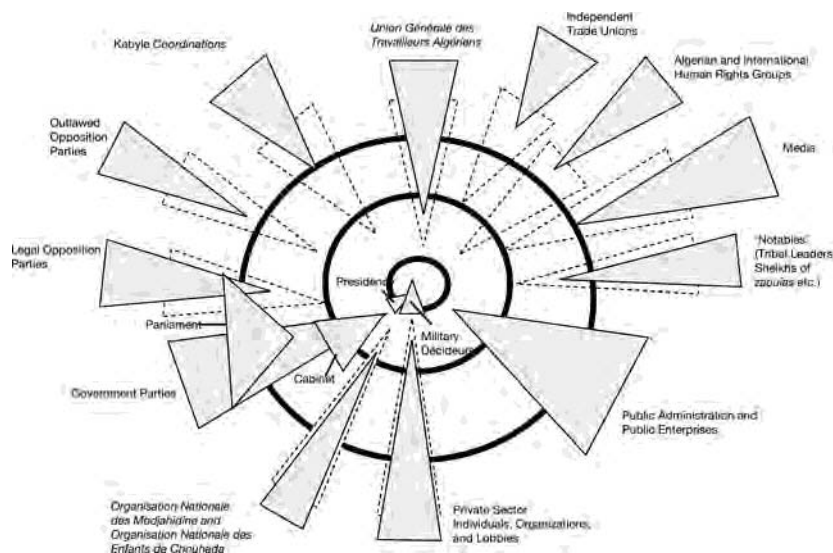


Figure IV.1 Segments of the Algerian politically relevant elite in Bouteflika's first term.

number of retired generals, and the country's most important business people, kept a low profile, acting behind the scenes. But a majority of elites in this circle had direct access to one or more *décideurs* and were able to influence decisions or give advice on matters of strategic interest, such as economic and education sector reforms.

As of the mid to late 1990s, it was possible to discern five interrelated tendencies in this circle relevant for understanding the relationship between elite change and liberalization dynamics: (1) increasing divisions and struggles in the core elite that reproduced themselves violently among the clients of the core elite; (2) high turnover of personnel; (3) the almost complete replacement of the generation of the revolution by the second generation; (4) an increase in the number of private sector elites as well as elites with educational backgrounds in economics; and (5) an increasing co-optation of civil society actors into this circle.⁸⁷

3.1 Government elites: quick exchange of clients

Between 1988 and 2004 Algeria had twenty-two governments (including major reshuffles) – six of them in Bouteflika's first term alone, a period that also produced four prime ministers. Ali Benflis, who was in office close to three years, turned out to be the longest serving prime minister since the end of the single-party system. Several ministers sat in cabinet only two or three months, bringing the number of persons occupying the post of minister between the advent of the Hamrouche reform government in 1989 and the firing of Benflis in 2003 to 217.

The government consisted of three parties: the FLN, the RND and the MSP,⁸⁸ but roughly half of the forty cabinet members did not belong to a party. The overwhelming majority could be described as technocrats; politicians in the Weberian sense remained rare.⁸⁹ Most cabinet members came from the state bureaucracy, the public economic sector, universities, or international organizations and institutions, though one minister used to be a civil society activist (for women's rights) and several others had a private-sector background (cf. Annex 2). The influence of the various ministers strongly depended on their specific clientelist affiliations. The 2002 cabinet members fell mainly into three categories: the president's men, the military's men, and the prime minister's men and women. A fourth, smaller category consisted of people co-opted by the army and/or the president for the sake of social stability. The president's men⁹⁰ tended to be the oldest ministers, came from the west of the country (in four cases from Nedroma, a town in the wilaya of Tlemcen), were reform-oriented technocrats, sat in the more important ministries, and usually had (international) experience and high competence in their respective fields. In addition to 'regional capital' and 'capital of competence', several of these ministers also had 'historical capital' – that is, they participated in the war of liberation and belonged to a network stemming from those times, such as the MALG.⁹¹

The prime minister's people tended to occupy less important ministries.⁹² They all came from the FLN and reflected that party's new desirable profile: young, with university degrees, and speaking the language of reform. Moreover, three of them were women. Despite their relatively young age – most were in their forties – several of Benflis' ministers had historical capital by inheritance, as children or relatives of prominent revolutionaries, martyrs or leaders of the Association des Oulémas.⁹³ Although a number of these ministers were elected to parliament in 2002, few had experience in party, local or national politics. Many only joined the FLN or became active in it for the 2002 campaign; a lack of politicization appeared to have been an asset for upward mobility in this case.

The military's men, roughly half a dozen ministers, had little in common except that they were reputed or confirmed to have a 'godfather' other than the president in the first circle. Some of them occupied strategically important ministries, such as justice, or were ministers without portfolios. Finally, there were the three ministers of the co-opted Islamist MSP. Though the MSP received only minor ministries, it still obtained a certain bargaining or even veto power because the government needed an Islamist party (fig leaf) to claim legitimacy through pluralism. But without a godfather in the first circle, the influence of MSP ministers was limited and, similar to some of the prime minister's men and women, they belonged to the third, or outer, circle of influence rather than the second circle.

3.2 Private sector elites: the emergence of a powerful lobby

Developments in the Algerian economy after the political opening had produced two phenomena that became particularly obvious in the first term of Bouteflika: private sector tycoons⁹⁴ and lobbies of private sector elites. These developments were primarily a result of economic liberalization, but did not necessarily imply a new push for economic reforms since interests of the different emerging (private sector) lobbies conflicted. As of 1989, private business associations close to reformers in government had begun to form and to become politically relevant, most notably the Confédération Algérienne du Patronat (CAP) and the Confédération Générale des Opérateurs Économiques Algériens (CGOEA) and, later, the Confédération Nationale du Patronat Algérien (CNPA). Central demands raised by these associations throughout the 1990s were the calls for easier access to (state) bank credits and revision of the tax system.⁹⁵ During the association negotiations with the EU they lobbied for high import tariffs on consumer goods with limited success. At the turn of the century, these associations were weakened by rivalries between and within them, and their financially most potent members joined the Forum des Chefs d'Entreprise (FCE), which was founded in October 2000. By 2004, this forum united roughly a hundred of the country's largest entrepreneurs – most of them industrialists – and defined itself as a lobby with an interest in setting the economic agenda.⁹⁶

The FCE was, for instance, instrumental in forcing the government to introduce regulations in 2003 more favourable to producers and less favourable to the import lobby – the first draft of the proposed 2003 finance law had still strongly favoured large importers. FCE clout also became visible when its president was invited (together with the head of the UGTA) to accompany the commerce minister to Algeria's fourth round of membership negotiations with the WTO in November 2002.

The FCE's impact on government policies could not, however, be explained simply *qua* successful campaigns, but rather through direct access to the core elite. Some FCE members had blood, familial or regional ties to generals or the president; others shared a common revolutionary experience with core elites.⁹⁷ Because of different and even diametrically opposed vested interests – those of someone producing foodstuffs and owning a newspaper, such as Issad Rebrab, were obviously not the same as those of someone owning an airline and a bank, such as Rafik Khalifa – FCE members often found it difficult to find a common denominator and, as a result, the best-connected lobbied individually and informally for their respective interests and prevailed in setting the FCE agenda.⁹⁸ Struggles between Bouteflika and his foes were also carried into the FCE prior to the 2004 elections, when a number of FCE members left the organization after a majority of members voted in support of endorsing Bouteflika. Among those resigning was Issad Rebrab, one of the country's largest and politically most influential industrialists, who was close to the anti-Bouteflika camp in the army. Another FCE member, Rafik Abdelmoumen Khalifa, overshadowed all other Algerian businessmen⁹⁹ in the late 1990s and early 2000s before he went bankrupt, causing the largest damage by one person to the Algerian state in its history.¹⁰⁰ His political relevance, however, always remained subject to speculation, for he was reputed to be a figurehead only, financed by generals wanting to launder their money or by Gulf state sheiks close to Bouteflika, depending on the source of the allegation.¹⁰¹ Regardless of his exact affiliations, Khalifa's trajectory was an example of the opaque intertwining of private interests with state power.

3.3 Old and new transmission belts: UGTA, 'famille révolutionnaire' and the zaouïas

Several of the former *parti unique* mass organizations and so-called FLN satellites remained politically relevant and, to a limited extent, still functioned as transmission belts more than ten years after the end of the single-party system. Most of these organizations were, at least formally, non-governmental and independent from regime parties. In reality they remained powerful tools for (electoral) mobilization for core elites and their clients in government and parliament. This was particularly true for the UGTA and the ONM, the official veterans' organization, as well as, to varying degrees, the Union Nationale de la Jeunesse Algérienne (UNJA), the

Union Nationale des Étudiants Algériens (UNEA), the Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes (UNFA), the Union Nationale des Paysans Algériens (UNPA) and the Scouts Musulmans. Other organizations that sprung up during the 1990s like the Organisation des Enfants de Moudjahidine (ONEM) or the Organisation Nationale des Victimes du Terrorisme (ONVT) modelled themselves after the ONM. What virtually all of these organizations had in common was that they were politically relevant for two reasons: their cadres' direct access to the core elite, and their substantial bargaining and veto-power based primarily but not exclusively on their potential to mobilize voters during elections. A number of these organizations also had an additional resource which made them powerful: they could play the card of historic legitimacy and, hence, moral superiority. This was true for all organizations that fell under the umbrella of the '*famille révolutionnaire*' – a term coined by Zeroual in an effort to rally all non-Islamist forces under an umbrella of nationalism and homage to the revolution.

The UGTA, having played a vital role in the war of independence, also belonged to the *famille révolutionnaire*. With more than 2 million members according to its own information, it remained the largest and most powerful of all unions. Its strong veto power became obvious in 2002, when it forced Bouteflika to shelve the draft for a new hydrocarbon bill.¹⁰² The efforts made by the Bouteflika camp to court the UGTA after its secretary general, Abdelmadjid Sidi Said, initially sided with Benflis in the Bouteflika–Benflis power struggle were another indication of its political weight. However, Benflis' successor Ouyahia managed to soften Sidi Said's anti-Bouteflika position by making concessions to the UGTA in the autumn of 2003.¹⁰³ The proximity of the UGTA and the other former *parti unique* unions to the core and second circle elites, i.e. governing elites, was evident.¹⁰⁴ For once, they remained the only interlocutors accepted by the government – regime independent unions were generally ignored. Moreover, decisions on which the core elite seemed to agree on were – if at all – only weakly contested by the UGTA, e.g. the dismantling of state-owned enterprises. Conversely, decisions contested by a majority within the core elite, such as the hydrocarbon bill, were fiercely fought by the UGTA. Divergences within the core elite reflected themselves in the UGTA's wavering on certain issues, such as the endorsement of a 2004 presidential candidate that finally ended with a reluctant endorsement of Bouteflika.

A second former mass organization, the ONM, was the classic example of organizations that had political influence qua historic legitimacy. Veterans' rights had been anchored in the constitution in 1976 and entailed a long list of material privileges apart from a 'war rent'.¹⁰⁵ The fact that both the ONM and the Organisation Nationale des Enfants de Chouhada (ONEC) were political instruments and had political weight was reflected in the state's allocation of funds to them: in the 2004 budget draft bill the *moudjahidine* item was the fourth largest, receiving only one-third less than defence and more than higher education and the entire health sector.

Another indicator of these organizations' capacity to influence politics was the intense courting of their support by the presidential candidates Benflis and Bouteflika – as the situation between these two became tenser, cadres resisting support of Bouteflika even risked physical assaults.¹⁰⁶ Influence of top cadres in these organizations thus varied depending on political conjunctures; in pre-election periods they could be found in the second circle, while after elections most of them tended to belong to the third circle.

The material benefits and prestige attached to the veteran status explains the large number of apparently *faux moudjahidine* – the number of officially acknowledged veterans rose from 24,000 in 1962 to 420,000 in 1999.¹⁰⁷ It also explains the intense efforts to make hereditary the historical capital of veterans through organizations such as the Organisation Nationale des Enfants de Moudjahidine, founded in 1993 to 'support the fight against terrorism'.¹⁰⁸ This rhetoric linking the war for independence with the 'fight against terrorism' was a central element in legitimizing the privileges allocated to members of the *famille révolutionnaire*. Hence, it was only logical for organizations that sprang up during the civil war, such the Organisation Nationale des Victimes du Terrorisme, to be incorporated into the official (and self-styled) 'revolutionary community'. The fictional and mythical *famille révolutionnaire* thus constituted what Roy (1994) called a 'modern asabiyya' (primordial loyalty). Being a cadre in one of the above organizations or associations was also an excellent stepping-stone for entering the PRE and reaching key positions in the Algerian system – Ali Kafi, for instance, was secretary general of the ONM before being made president of the HCE, and top cadres of the above organizations were found in parliament, with some MPs sitting in the executive of two such organizations.

Finally, the sheiks of large *zaouïas* – the term under which Algerians subsumed the religious brotherhoods – had gained political influence in the 1990s that could in pre-election times place them in the second circle of the elite, while they did not belong to the PRE at all outside electoral periods. In contrast to virtually all other politically relevant actors they, somewhat paradoxically, could have an influence on political reforms – through their backing of a specific presidential candidate – without having any (voiced) stake in these reforms. These sheiks were primarily interested in the allocation of funds, which allowed them to uphold their brotherhood's structures and their (personal) clientele, and in personal privileges.¹⁰⁹ As a result they tended to support those in power and contribute to the upholding of the political status quo. The political relevance of sheiks of brotherhoods such as the Rahmaniya or the Tidjaniya stemmed from the fact that they had become increasingly important to core elites for two reasons: they presented an antipode and counter-weapon to Islamism, and their spiritual leaders could reach out to a huge number of people. The Algerian Union Nationale des *Zaouïas* in 2003 included 8,900 *zaouïas*, the largest of which had tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of adherents.¹¹⁰ The brotherhoods were thus an ideal tool for mobilizing electoral support. Bouteflika in the

2004 pre-election campaign courted the leaders of zaouïas more than any Algerian president had ever done and allocated funds to them; as a result he received the support of virtually all important sheiks of zaouïas.¹¹¹

4 The third circle of the elite: self-dynamics of fragmentation

The third circle of the politically relevant elite – comprising those actors with indirect and often only temporary influence on decision-making *qua* advisory, veto, bargaining or nuisance power – was by far the most dynamic circle. A number of collective actors who had emerged during the political opening managed to retain some of their influence after the coup, most prominently the private press and some Islamist (contesting) elites. In the late 1990s, moreover, new politically relevant collective actors, such as the Kabyle *coordinations*, emerged. This was possible because of changes in the political opportunity structures. Finally, the splits in the first circle were not just being reproduced in this circle but actually multiplied. Hence, this circle included clients of core and second circle elites on the one hand, and leaders of contesting forces on the other hand. A third category were those best described as somewhat paradoxical semi-contesters like the MSP and, for a while, the Berberophone Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie (RCD). These actors often exhibited anti-system rhetoric similar to that of radical contesters but (at times) sat in government, and in parliament tended to vote like the FLN and RND.

The clients who had been lifted into the PRE by patrons in the governing elite had good chances at moving into the second circle and were found primarily in the executive of the RND and the FLN, in the *famille révolutionnaire*, and in unions and NGOs¹¹² close to first and second circle elites. Usually they also sat in one of the two parliamentary chambers. Indeed, many of these regime-supporting MPs formed a clientelist link between the local and national levels, between mass organizations, and between the first and second circle elites who used these organizations and numerous smaller NGOs to broaden the power base of the regime. Hachemaoui (2003) has pertinently termed such MPs ‘entrepreneurs of clientelist mediation’.¹¹³

The contesting elites who wanted to alter or even completely change the political system comprised two large groups: Islamists and leftists. Although most contesting elites had imposed themselves or had been pushed into the PRE from below by social forces such as the Kabyle protest movement, their co-optation and movement into the second circle was not uncommon, as evidenced by the fortunes of MSP and UGTA cadres and a handful of press elites.

Overall, the third circle of the elite witnessed a number of changes and developments in the second half of the 1990s that had important consequences for understanding the dynamics and specific results of the liberalization process. Most notably there was a sharp increase in the number of actors who could move into the third circle. Often, however, their presence

in the PRE was only temporary and linked to changing opportunity structures, i.e. to political and economic conjunctures on the national and international level and to specific strategic issues dominating the national political debate. Different strategic issues brought in different politically relevant actors and produced different cross-cutting cleavages. A second evident development in this circle of the PRE was the growing dominance of actors born after independence. This rejuvenation was, on the one hand, engineered by core and second circle elites to appease a generation hitherto excluded from power. On the other hand, the generational change was a result of young contesting forces being pushed into the elite as a result of (re-)appearing generational conflicts over participation and power-sharing.

4.1 Clients and contesters: the parliament

Several of the main developments in the third circle were reflected in the 1997 and the 2002 parliaments. The Assemblée Populaire Nationale (APN), the lower chamber of parliament, was a sphere of massive elite turnover: more than 80 per cent of 1997 MPs were not re-elected in 2002. The APN, moreover, became an arena for elite rejuvenation. In 1997, 11 per cent of MPs had belonged to the generation born after independence; by 2002 this number had more than doubled to 25 per cent. Both developments, the huge turnover and the rejuvenation, were orchestrated primarily by party leaders. In 2002, moreover, private sector elites moved into parliament in larger numbers than ever before. At the end of the single-party era in 1989, only 1 to 2 per cent of MPs had a private sector background; in 2002 this figure climbed to 10 per cent.

Neither of the two parliamentary chambers was a powerful institution in the constitutional sense. Both chambers tended to rubber-stamp the executive's decisions – with notable exceptions on two occasions in 2003.¹¹⁴ The Conseil de la Nation (also termed Sénat) was primarily a parking lot for aging former top functionaries with historical capital or, for its younger members, a waiting room for entry into the executive or diplomatic corps. Most of its members had been recycled in various political or administrative positions for decades. The APN, the lower chamber of parliament, on the other hand, was politically relevant, despite limitations that primarily went back to the informality of political decision-making in the Algerian system.

Though the APN was dominated by the RND and the FLN, both in 1997 and 2002 (cf. Table IV.2) it turned into a platform for controversial debates and agenda-setting with the first-time entry of two opposition parties¹¹⁵ and three 'semi-opposition' parties¹¹⁶ in 1997 – not least because parliamentary debates were initially covered live by the state television. Among sensitive issues raised in parliament were persons (generally Islamists) who disappeared during the civil war or the government's refusal to officially recognize a number of independent unions despite a law allowing for union freedom. In November 2003, MPs of the Islamist Mouvement pour la Réforme Nationale (MRN, or El Islah, which split from Ennahda in 1999) managed to pass a prohibition

on alcohol imports, despite the executive's strong initial resistance to such a move.¹¹⁷ The same party was the instrumental force behind an electoral law reform in January 2004, making vote-rigging more difficult. MPs that could be categorized as contesting actors thus had more political influence than MPs that were clients of first and second circle elites and that could generally not even be considered to belong to the PRE – unless they were top cadres in the FLN or RND, or an organization/association close to these parties.

4.2 *Islamist contesters*

Islamist contesters were, ten years after the ban of the FIS, still a force to be reckoned with, even if the Islamist scene had become deeply split, primarily as a result of repression and co-optation. The most powerful Islamist actor towards the end of Bouteflika's first term was the opposition MRN. It became the third most influential political force within the formal political system after the 2002 parliamentary elections (cf. Table IV.2). The power of this party lay primarily in its informal nuisance and, occasionally, even veto power, i.e. in its ability to slow down or prevent reforms in the education sector and other areas by discrediting such measures as an 'occidentalization' of society, and thus mobilizing conservative opinion. Despite its two earlier cited successful parliamentary initiatives, the MRN had limited formal legislative power because it remained a minority in parliament and on many issues had no allies. Its 'natural ally' MSP, the Islamist party in government, while often using the same rhetoric usually did not act upon it in order not to endanger its privileged position.¹¹⁸

The real (electoral) power of other contesting Islamist forces was hard to evaluate because these groups could not operate openly and chose to keep a low profile, a strategy in particular of Islamist charities linked to such groups.¹¹⁹ The FIS was outlawed and the moderate Islamist, or Arabo-nationalist, Wafa, headed by Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, a core elite under Boumedienne and a former revolutionary, was refused official recognition. Ibrahimi, the most hopeful opposition candidate in the 1999 presidential race, had been accused of trying to create a FIS successor organization even though Wafa was less radical in its social or political visions than the MRN.¹²⁰ The fact that Ibrahimi was prevented from running in the 2004 elections on questionable formalistic grounds¹²¹ spoke of his potential electoral power and the fears he aroused among core and second circle elites – even if there were many signs that competition and animosity between different Islamist leaders would weaken their collective impact.¹²²

The leaders of the FIS were physically eliminated, imprisoned or deprived of their political rights throughout the 1990s. Nevertheless, the party's numbers one and two, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, who were in prison from June 1991 to July 2003,¹²³ could not be ignored by the regime and hence remained politically relevant during their imprisonment. The support of the FIS leadership for holding presidential elections in 1999 and for the

Concorde civile was crucial to incumbent elites because it offered them broad legitimacy and allowed for the integration of parts of the FIS electorate into the formal political process. In the 2004 presidential elections considerable media attention was given to FIS endorsements of a presidential candidate¹²⁴ and to reconciliation proposals forwarded by Madani after his release.¹²⁵ This showed that the FIS leaders were still seen to wield at least substantial symbolic power. Yet with some FIS elites and part of its electorate co-opted, and with at least three different currents emerging between and within the leadership in Algeria and in exile,¹²⁶ the FIS by the early 2000s did not appear in a position to regain the influence it held in the early 1990s, when its leaders were about to move from the second to the first circle. The formerly radical Islamist camp appeared to have pragmatized and to converge to a certain extent with the conservative forces that had always existed within the FLN.¹²⁷ Elections, such as the presidential ones in 2004, while not free and fair enough to allow for a definite judgement nevertheless gave an indication of Islamist backing in the population. In 2004, the MRN's Djaballah, who offered a platform that diverged little from that of a FIS leader like Madani, attained a poor 5.02 per cent of the vote. It appeared that Algeria had by the early 2000s indeed entered into a new era marked by post-Islamist conflicts, as Perthes (2002: 344ff.) and others argued.

The remaining armed Islamist groups, most notably the GIA and the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat, by the early 2000s could not be considered to be politically relevant actors as defined in this study. While they initially had fought for political goals – that is, for an Islamic political and social order and for a change of regime – most of them no longer pursued (clearly) discernable political goals. By the late 1990s, these groups could barely be distinguished from criminal groups engaged in racketeering, smuggling and settling of (economic) accounts. They did, however, provide the army with a justification for not lifting the state of emergency and continuing its repression of certain groups. The core elite thus had an interest in exaggerating their force at times and downplaying it at others.¹²⁸

4.3 Left-wing contesters

Elites on the political left – from leaders of political parties to the Kabyle *coordinations*, independent unions and human rights organizations – formed another important force contesting the existing political system. At the same time, these actors exemplified the problems hampering opposition forces from uniting and becoming a real force of change. Moreover, only the leaders of the most powerful left-wing parties could be counted as part of the elite on a more permanent basis. These parties were the Trotskyite Parti des Travailleurs (PT), led by Louisa Hanoune,¹²⁹ and the social democratic and Berberophone Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS), presided over by Hocine Aït-Ahmed, one of the nine principal leaders of the war of liberation. Both parties advocated regime and system change, though they differed

on strategies. Although both parties advocated regime and system change and shared the goal of democratization and national reconciliation that includes the FIS – the FFS and the PT were signatories of the Platform of Rome in 1995 – they fell out over tactical issues, such as whether to demand international inquiries into massacres committed in the second half of the 1990s and whether to participate in elections in 2002.¹³⁰ The PT, not least because of the FFS' boycott of the 2002 parliamentary polls, quadrupled its seats in 2002 (cf. Table IV.2). The FFS, on the other hand, which had strong regional (Kabyle) roots and historical legitimacy, not only catapulted itself out of the national formal political arena in 2002, but also lost parts of its constituency to the Kabyle uprising, which soon turned into a strong protest movement. By early 2004 this former contesting force with considerable nuisance power for decades was in danger of drifting off into political irrelevance.

4.4 Temporary contesters

4.4.1 Elites of the Kabyle protest movement

The emergence of what was referred to as the Kabyle citizens' movement or the *aârouh*¹³¹ – enhanced the fragmentation of the more established contesting elites. It weakened the existing Berberophone parties FFS and RCD by drafting a part of their (younger) constituencies and by enhancing competition within the Kabyle community.¹³² The RCD was even forced to leave government as a result of the uprisings in order not to completely lose its constituency. This new protest movement consisted of a number of so-called *coordinations*, differing in genesis and internal structure,¹³³ and featured a collective and generally young leadership. Within only a few weeks the movement developed a substantial nuisance power and later also bargaining power. On 14 June 2001, it was the driving force behind a march towards Algiers with over a million participants. Ten months later, in April 2002, its threat to boycott elections could be seen as one of the main reasons for the government's decision to finally give Tamazight the constitutional status of a national language.¹³⁴ The movement nevertheless went on to largely prevent – not least through violent means including destruction of property – the holding of national and communal elections in May and October 2002 in Kabylia.

In a reaction to the sudden and to them threatening mobilizing dynamics of this movement, the RCD and the FFS as well as the government tried to repress, split and control the movement.¹³⁵ These efforts did increase internal splits between *coordinations* over whether to negotiate with the government and whether or not to reduce their demands. However, those remaining adamant that, without the fulfilment of their political and social demands as stated in the Platform of El Kseur they would neither negotiate nor co-operate with state agencies, tended to prevail.

Though such maximalist demands threatened to drive the movement into a political dead end in 2003, it managed to again assert a certain bargaining power before the 2004 elections; Benflis' successor Ahmed Ouyahia, a Kabyle himself, seemed determined to calm the situation in Kabylia through negotiated concessions. Even leaving aside such pre-election opportunities, the movement was not likely to disappear since it was, among other things, an expression of a generational conflict. Much of the movement's strength had come from the increasing number of young Berbers completely alienated from (national) political life.¹³⁶ The *coordinations'* mode of operation was not only one of formal political dissent, political campaigns and civil disobedience, but also one of total rejection and of – in some instances violent – confrontation with the authorities and fellow Kabyles.¹³⁷

The quick rise of the Kabyle protest movement could also be explained by the specific conjuncture of opportunities on both the national and the international level. These opportunities included: popular discontent with elected bodies on the local level; splits within the core elite over how to deal with the uprising on the national level; the executive's desire not to burden negotiations with the EU over an association agreement with continuous human rights abuses; and, finally, support of the movement by national and international media and human rights organizations. The latter two factors – the movement's support by other actors with a strong nuisance power and the goal to conclude international treaties – could be seen as the main reasons why first and second circle elites did not repress the Kabyle protest movement as brutally as they had repressed the emerging FIS ten years earlier.¹³⁸ Once the opportunity structures changed (e.g. elections had finished, an agreement with the EU had been reached, international media attention became monopolized by the developments in Iraq), the movement lost much of its nuisance power. In addition, the movement's heterogeneous structures and internal squabbles significantly contributed to its loss of impact.¹³⁹ The trajectory of this protest movement exemplified how a new political force became an arena of regime manipulation and opposition manoeuvring and a victim of its own internal struggles and structures, and how this seriously weakened its political impact over time.

4.4.2 Human rights elites

Prominent human rights activists in Algeria and in exile had developed a nuisance power that temporarily even moved them into the second circle until opportunity structures changed with the events of 11 September 2001. These events overnight and *ex post* internationally legitimized the Algerian use of force against Islamists. As of the mid-1990s, Algerian and foreign human rights organizations in France, such as the Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme or Algeria Watch, had contributed to the isolation of the Algerian core elite by launching the *Qui tue qui?* campaign in the French press. Ironically, it was General Nezzar who in July 2002 gave

prominent Algerian human rights activists and regime contesters a prime opportunity to make their accusations in a highly publicized arena. Nezzar had filed a complaint of defamation in a French court against ex-Algerian army officer Habib Souaidia. Before the judge dismissed the case on the grounds that the court could not judge history – a calamity for Nezzar – he allowed for lengthy testimony from anti-regime witnesses.

Human rights activists also presented a strong nuisance force within Algeria. Organizations such as the Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LADDH), presided over by Ali Yahia Abdelnour, the Algerian human rights activist par excellence, SOS Disparus and the Association Nationale des Familles des Disparus, relentlessly pushed the issue of the over 7,000 (predominantly Islamist) Algerians who disappeared during the civil war on to the national political agenda and forced the establishment to react.¹⁴⁰ The improvement of the Algerian human rights record since the mid-1990s,¹⁴¹ and the army's efforts to convey a new image testified to the nuisance power of the above groups and their elites. Obviously, human rights campaigns were not the only factors behind these developments but the globalization of justice that manifested itself in the Milosevic trial and the Rwanda war tribunal sent a powerful signal to Algeria's leaders, for it threatened to affect their political and economic interests. The perspective that France or Switzerland could one day no longer present a safe haven for one's property, family and self proved highly discomforting for the generals and prompted them to reconsider their strategies.¹⁴²

Similar to all other contesting actors, human rights actors were subject to repression and co-optation. Not only were a number of organizations not officially recognized,¹⁴³ but human rights activists were regularly deprived of their passports or jailed.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, there were continuous efforts by first and second circle elites to weaken contesting actors by creating or supporting organizations close to the regime to compete with them. The main feature of these organizations was that they defended the human rights of some people but not of others.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, the impact of all of the above groups sharply declined after 11 September, when the Algerian regime was suddenly praised by the US and the Europeans for its fight against what was ex post framed to be 'international terrorism'. In 2003, with the rise of the new American democratization agenda, human rights groups appeared to regain some of their former leverage.¹⁴⁶

4.4.3 Independent union elites

Other political actors with substantial but only temporary influence through nuisance power were independent unions. This was true particularly for those in the medical and education fields, for instance, the Syndicat National des Personnels de l'Administration Publique (SNAPAP), the Syndicat Autonome des Travailleurs de l'Éducation et de la Formation (SATEF) the Conseil des Lycées d'Alger (CLA) and the Conseil National Autonome des

Professeurs de l'Enseignement Secondaire et Technique (CNAPEST). Though the UGTA and its affiliated unions generally remained the government's sole interlocutor, membership in the autonomous unions increased steadily.¹⁴⁷ Towards the end of the 1990s these unions staged widely followed strikes that usually ended up with the authorities receiving them, but rarely led to concessions. In the fall of 2003, however, the CLA and the CNAPEST, two unofficial unions, called for a teachers' strike that lasted over eight weeks and heralded what the Algerian press termed 'the end of a monopoly'.¹⁴⁸ These unions pushed through higher salaries for teachers, brought the harassment of autonomous union executives to national and international public attention,¹⁴⁹ and provoked a parliamentary debate on the arbitrary use of the law regarding the legalization of unions. Their supporters spanned from the *adrouch* and left-wing contesters (with the exception of the FFS) to the Islamist MRN. The regime's strategy to weaken these groups ranged from repression and defamation to efforts at splitting them by – a move typical of core elite strategies vis-à-vis newly emerging opponents – refusing to negotiate with them directly: the interior ministry insisted on the Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs de l'Éducation (FNTE), which was close to the UGTA, as an intermediary, thus trying to reinforce the latter's monopoly in the education sector. Core and second circle elite's efforts at discrediting the leaders of these autonomous unions ranged from pushing them into the Islamist corner to stating that 'la main étrangère' was behind them.¹⁵⁰ This 'foreign hand' had already served in attempts to discredit the Kabyle uprising as well as the few independent human rights organizations.

4.5 Clients or contesters?

4.5.1 Press elites

The Algerian non-state printed press, in both French and Arabic, appeared to be remarkably free and powerful by Arab comparison, though it only reached 128th place in a 167-country survey by Reporters Sans Frontières in 2004.¹⁵¹ After almost a decade of being repressed and of many of its members being murdered, the printed press had gained back some of its plurality, freedom and dynamics by the early 2000s¹⁵² – in 1999 alone, twenty new titles appeared.¹⁵³ By 2003 Algeria counted forty-six daily papers, roughly half of which were in French. The non-state press reported on every move against the Kabyle *coordinations*, human rights activists and journalists. Its vigilance and pre-emptive campaigns could also be deemed a contribution to preventing wide-scale manipulation of the parliamentary and communal elections in 2002, and it repeatedly uncovered corruption scandals involving core and second circle elites.¹⁵⁴ Even the army was increasingly being criticized and treated with irony.¹⁵⁵ Also, the printed press was responsible for deconstructing the reform image of Bouteflika, pointing to his authoritarian style of rule and his (family's) alleged shady business dealings.¹⁵⁶

However, most of the non-state newspapers were financially dependent on public funds¹⁵⁷ and reputed to have close ties to one or the other clan linked to core or, in some cases, second circle elites.¹⁵⁸ Each newspaper was free (or even encouraged) to report on and criticize all persons, political currents and issues except those linked to its patrons.¹⁵⁹ Several editors-in-chief, columnists and journalists had good relations with core or second circle elites, and as a result ran campaigns for or against somebody, and some journalists were, in quite obvious ways, messengers and speakers for one or the other current in the military hierarchy. Hence, the pluralism of the state press primarily reflected the ‘pluralism’ within the core elite. To speak of an independent press was thus misleading and the more neutral term ‘private press’ seemed more adequate.

In 2002 and 2003, the private press, with its relentless attacks on Bouteflika, seemed to turn into an army instrument for making and unmaking the president – as it had done with Zeroual in 1998. There existed a clear division of labour between, on the one hand, the state-owned TV and radio – the monopoly over the electronic media remained with the state – and state-owned newspapers, such as *El-Moudjahid*, controlled by Bouteflika and, on the other hand, the private press largely close to certain generals and businessmen. The former praised the president’s achievements in an almost Pravda-like style;¹⁶⁰ the latter deconstructed him in political pamphlet-like manner. Overall, the increasing cacophony in the press mirrored the fierce intra-elite power struggles not just between the president and the military hierarchy but also within the latter. With these struggles growing out of hand, press control threatened to slip out of the core elite’s hand, many taboos broke and spaces opened up for voices belonging to no specific camp.¹⁶¹ At the same time, the many voices in disaccord, the large and increasing number of daily newspapers¹⁶² and the absence of concerted campaigns (the one against the president presenting an exception, to a certain extent) weakened the potentially strong impact of the private press.

4.5.2 *Elites of the ‘democratic camp’*

A rather disperse group of at times politically relevant individuals could be found in the so-called democratic camp. As opposed to the ‘nationalist’ camp, embodied primarily by the FLN, these actors defined themselves as the antipode to the Islamists¹⁶³ and rallied around a (radically) secular, universalistic platform, inspired by occidental values.¹⁶⁴ In most cases these actors headed an insignificant party that had either not been legalized, such as Sid Ahmed Ghozali’s Front Démocratique, or recognized parties that boycotted elections in 2002 such as Redha Malek’s Alliance Nationale Républicaine and Hachemi Chérif’s Mouvement Démocratique et Social, or Said Sadi’s RCD, the only party in the ‘democratic camp’ with a popular (even if small) base.¹⁶⁵ Most of these actors had at one time belonged to the second circle of the elite – Sid Ahmed Ghozali who had been prime minister

from June 1991 to August 1992 – or even to the first circle, such as Redha Malek, a former prime minister, HCE member and one of the negotiators of Algeria's independence at Evian in 1961 and 1962. At some point they had been ousted from the first or second circles, or had 'ejected' themselves and developed a strong personal rancour against some, but usually not all, core elite members. Other 'democrats' had made a name for themselves in the human rights field, for instance the lawyer Miloud Brahimi, albeit in organizations such as the LADH that were known for a lesser distance to the military *décideurs* than the LADDH.¹⁶⁶

Although the 'democrats' condemned the existing system and, for instance, tended to support the Kabyle insurgency, they had sided with the *janvieristes* after the coup d'état. Hence, classifying them as contesters (and democrats) remained problematic and semi-contesters or critical regime supporters seemed more appropriate. Their influence resulted from their being the 'darlings' of the French-language press and well connected in the international arena. This allowed them to lobby (quite) successfully on certain issues, such as the release of the detained leaders of the Kabyle protest movement. Generally, the political influence of these players was limited to presenting an occasional thorn in the side of the president and his entourage, and, on rare occasions, in the side of some generals. At the same time their existence was vital for the core elite and for the status quo since these actors attested to the plurality of the system without threatening its foundations. In that sense they fulfilled a function similar to that of the moderate Islamist MSP.

5 Conclusion

The above analysis has shown that a plethora of new politically relevant actors – including actors who contested the existing political system and its governing elite – were able to emerge in the second half of the 1990s. Members of the core elite, in an effort to broaden their power base and to institutionalize controllable valves, recruited new and younger actors into the formal political system. Moreover, the interplay of specific national and international factors – political liberalization, economic restructuring, civil war, the globalization of justice, and Algeria's increasing embeddedness in international treaties – facilitated the emergence of a number of new contesting actors that at times successfully pressed for certain concessions or blocked core elite strategies. These actors profited from fierce power struggles within the core elite and from what looked like the beginning of a redefinition of the relationship between the army's general command and the political executive. The result of these new dynamics within the PRE was a substantially reduced range of action for the core elite.

However, these developments did not – contrary to what could be expected based on transition experiences in Latin America and Eastern Europe – develop discernible democratization dynamics. No strong and coherent preferable alternative in the sense of Przeworski (1986: 51–2) was able to emerge in

the period under examination and the core elite – despite experiencing increasing pressure from contesting actors and being pushed to change its (communication) strategies – was not forced to engage in a pact over new and more democratic rules of the game. One of the principal reasons for this was the increasing fragmentation of an already historically fractionalized and fragmented politically relevant elite. This fragmentation was the result of several factors that reinforced each other.

The core elite, in an effort to control liberalization dynamics, employed a *divide et impera* strategy that consisted of three pillars: repression (e.g. of radical Islamists as well as human rights actors), co-optation (e.g. of media actors, moderate opposition parties) and encouragement of real and fake competition through support for parallel structures close to the regime (be they unions, associations, parties or newspapers). Also, with core elite members showing increasing disunity in vision and strategy, both clients and contesters were instrumentalized by some core elite members to undermine the power of other core elite members. This opened up spaces for contesting actors. As a result, the dynamics of fragmentation were no longer fully controllable by core elite members. The rise of the Islamist MRN and, even more so, the Kabyle uprising and the ensuing self-fragmentation of the Kabyle political landscape were but two examples showing how strong and uncontrollable the dynamics of liberalization and of fragmentation could become. Nevertheless, these dynamics did not seriously destabilize the existing system and its core elite.

What served the core elite were longstanding and deep divisions in Algerian society as a whole – be they divisions based on regionalism, ethnicity or language, or those based on historic rivalries, or those perceived in terms of conflicts of Western versus Arab-Muslim values. These cleavages that were, to a certain extent, successfully managed by the core elites – the ‘ethnicizing’ of the Kabyle uprising was but one example – prevented the emergence of a broad and coherent alliance of contesting actors. A further factor weakening contesting actors in particular was that their influence fluctuated wildly, since it was limited to some but usually not all strategic issues and was contingent on specific opportunity structures. In addition, alliances among various reform-oriented actors in the second and third circles of the PRE were strongly hampered by radically different outlooks on strategic issues of national relevance.

Hence, two opposing developments – growing pressure on the core elite and at the same time an increasing fragmentation of the politically relevant elite that rendered change difficult – counterbalanced each other. Though the Algerian system had not become stable, the various factors capable of causing instability created an uneasy equilibrium in Bouteflika’s first term. The outcome of the changes, struggles and dynamics within the PRE thus was system continuity, rather than discontinuity or disruption. One key for understanding the subtle mechanics of this continuity lay in the generational change and the specific recruitment mechanisms alluded to above and discussed in detail in the next chapter.

V The emergence of a new elite generation

Recruitment mechanisms and elite types

The term ‘generation’ has been part of the Algerian political vocabulary for decades. Those who had fought the war were not only referred to as *les moudjahidine* or *les révolutionnaires* but were, as younger generations matured, perceived in generational terms as *la génération de la révolution*.¹ Belonging to this generation implied a certain moral superiority *vis-à-vis* younger generations and demanded the latter’s respect. As a former minister put it, more than forty years after independence: ‘The men who made the revolution still think of themselves as the generation of fire, and everyone else born after the revolution as the generation of ashes.’² Indeed, President Bouteflika, in a pre-campaign speech, termed his own generation ‘a generation that will for ever remain the source of our inspiration . . . the origin of our historic memory and our frame of reference’.³ The Algerian revolutionary generation and its two successor generations found in the Algerian PRE in the early 2000s presented a perfect example of Mannheim’s (1952: 309) claim that a different generational experience produces a different ‘generation entelechy’, and that the extent to which such entelechies differ from one another ‘is closely connected to the tempo of social change’.

The generational dimension was strongly present in Algeria in the uprisings in 1988 and in the ascendance of the Islamist movement in the early 1990s. Both developments had been the rebellion of a generation hitherto excluded from political power. Generational conflicts persisted throughout the 1990s and were one important aspect of the Kabyle protest movement in the early 2000s. In Bouteflika’s first presidential term, the process of demystifying and dethroning the *génération de la révolution* was still a highly emotional and contested one. But *le rajeunissement* had become a slogan in political parties as diverse as the Islamist MRN and the FLN,⁴ and generational changes in the PRE were well under way.

By using common historical experiences and common formal educational experiences to delineate different generations, it was possible to discern three generations among the Algerian politically relevant elite: the generation that fought the revolution and was the product of the colonial education system (the revolutionary generation); the generation that came of age after independence in the era of state- (and nation-)building and that underwent the

main part of its formal education in a school system combining remnants of the colonizer's system with elements of a strongly nationalist approach to education (the second generation); and, finally, the generation that was born just around or after independence, that came of age at the end of the single-party system and that was a product of early Arabization efforts and mass education (the third generation).

This chapter focuses primarily on the third generation, and attempts to understand how the generational change took place, how this new generation differed from prior ones in its background, socialization and outlooks, what elite types it comprises and what all this implied for the prospects of political change being triggered by these actors as they began to move into key positions. Well aware that common experiences do not produce a homogeneous generation with wholesale political attitudes and uniform political behaviour, the third generation will be broken down into different elite ideal-types and illustrated by prototypes that represent 'real life' versions of the abstracted and constructed ideal-types. Data for the construction of elite categories and for the presentation of prototypes stems primarily from interviews with a hundred members of the PRE from all three generations, the majority of whom were from the third generation.⁵ The goal of the explorations below, however, is not a quantitative analysis of an elite generation, but the elaboration of trends within a generation based on qualitative analysis. Where numbers are given they merely indicate trends within a sample that was representative in that it included all important currents within the PRE at the time. But no claim is made that the sample mirrored the exact (measurable) weight of each elite type.

1 Modes of elite reproduction

1.1 Patterns of rejuvenation

By the end of Boutefflika's first term, a generational change was taking place or had already taken place in most elite segments, be it in government, political parties, the civil administration, unions or the private and public economic sectors. The third generation was moving to the top within the various elite segments and, as a result, this generation showed a strong presence in the third circle and increasingly made its way into the second circle of the PRE, albeit not (yet) into the first one. The fact that members of the revolutionary generation had lost their numerical dominance in the outer circles of the elite was partly due to biological factors – the youngest members of the revolutionary generation were around sixty and approaching retirement – but it was also the result of a deliberate strategy of rejuvenation by core elites and their clients in the second circle. This strategy of rejuvenation opened channels for upward mobility for – depending on the elite segment – the second and/or the third generation, and it was most visible in political parties and, as a result, in the parliament elected in 2002.

1.1.1 Generation change in political institutions

With the 2002 parliamentary elections the percentage of MPs belonging to the revolutionary generation dropped from 10.26 per cent to 4.12 per cent. The percentage of second-generation elites also decreased, from 73.16 per cent in 1997 to 64.44 per cent in 2002. Conversely the percentage of third-generation MPs almost doubled from 16.58 per cent to 31.44 per cent (cf. Figure V.1). A strategy of rejuvenation of the FLN, the largest party in the 2002 parliament was primarily behind this shift in the age structure. Ali Benflis, who had been elected secretary general in August 2001, was the party's first secretary general who did not come from the revolutionary generation. He orchestrated the comeback of the FLN, fulfilling his promise to rejuvenate the party and to bring more academics and women into it by assigning excellent list places to young candidates and women, both preferably with an academic background.⁶

This policy came as a response to demographic developments – at the beginning of the new millennium over 70 per cent of all Algerians were under the age of thirty – and was an effort to attract the many young potential voters who felt completely alienated from the political system because their generation was not represented. Conversely, Benflis had pushed all members of the revolutionary generation out of the party's sixteen-member Bureau Politique when he renewed it in November 2002.⁷ A year earlier, he had already brought the first member born after the revolution into the party executive, which had been a stronghold for more than three decades of what Algerians refer to as '*les dinosaures*'. Benflis was, moreover, responsible for appointing two members of the third generation to the 2002 cabinet. Indeed, the conflicts within the FLN that became manifest in 2003 and led to a split into a Benflis and a Bouteflika camp reflected in part power struggles

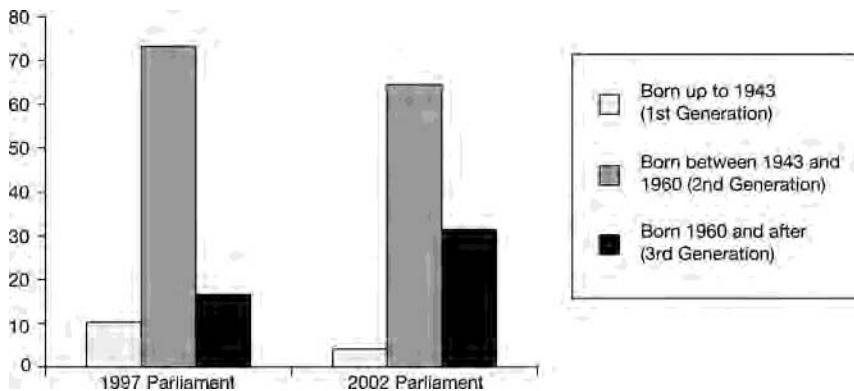


Figure V.1 Age distribution of Algerian members of parliament (1997 and 2002 parliaments, %).

over influence and posts between the revolutionary generation on the one hand, and the second and third generations on the other hand.

The second regime party, the RND, had already promoted a young image in the 1997 election campaign and continued this practice in 2002, mainly by pushing young candidates.⁸ The RND and FLN's 'affirmative action' for young candidates also explained the replacement of over 80 per cent of the 1997 parliament's MPs.⁹ While the FFS was not as vocal about rejuvenation as other parties, it also seemed to opt for a strong inclusion of the third generation: in 2002 six out of eleven members of the party's executive were born after the revolution. But the leaders of this trend had clearly been the Islamist parties. They had from their beginnings in the late 1980s recruited their top cadres from the second, and in some cases even the third, generation. The inclusion of younger generations by Islamist parties was a reflection of the generational component in the confrontation between the regime and the Islamists. With the regime excluding the third and to a large extent also the second generation from key positions even after the political opening, the FIS in the late 1980s became the primary forum for the younger generation's political voice – a function assumed, at least for young Kabyles, by the coordinations a decade later. Ali Belhadj, the FIS' number two, was born in 1956 and thus was far younger than all other actors with substantial political influence at the time, i.e. other second circle elites. While Hamas (later MSP) leader Mahfoudh Nahnah was a member of the revolutionary generation, those surrounding him throughout the 1990s came from the second or even third generation. When Nahnah died in 2003 he was succeeded by Aboudjerra Soltani who, being born in 1954, belonged to the second generation. The PT, finally, was a fortress of second-generation (radical) left-wingers, and the only Algerian party led by a woman. By the end of Bouteflika's first term – with the exception of the FFS, the not officially recognized Wafa and several tiny parties, locating themselves in the so-called democratic camp – no more parties were led by revolutionaries.

1.1.2 Rejuvenation of the top echelons of the army

Obtaining reliable and verifiable information on any developments within the Algerian army had always been difficult and remained so in the Bouteflika era, in spite of the army's new communication strategy. By combining information gathered from well-informed media sources, foreign diplomats, in-depth interviews with two retired generals, and casual conversations with young officers, it was nevertheless possible to discern trends regarding the generational change and patterns of recruitment within the army. The generational change the army had experienced in the late 1980s and early 1990s had taken place within the revolutionary generation and had not opened the door to the core elite for post-revolutionary generations. Those that came into power in this changing of the guard throughout the 1990s continued the practice of blocking younger successors, i.e. the second generation.

Only in the late 1990s did the first officers who lacked revolutionary legitimacy receive promotions to the rank of general, and only in 2002 did the first generals from the second generation become *général-major*.¹⁰ In 2003, four military regions were headed by generals who belonged to the second generation.¹¹ The same was true for the heads of the air and the naval forces, the *gendarmerie*, as well as for the secretary general of the ministry of defence.¹² Members of the third generation had attained the rank of colonel in the early 2000s, and were increasingly found in ever-higher positions in the general command. Yet these changes seemed to take place at a slower speed and/or later in time than in other segments of the PRE, and apparently left a number of officers frustrated: in 2001 and 2002, a wave of colonels in their late forties and early fifties took early retirement because they saw no prospects for advancement.¹³

As to the profiles of the second- and third-generation army top cadres, the one point army insiders and external observers agreed on was that the younger generations tended to strongly favour an end to army involvement in politics and a restriction of the army's role to the one laid down by the constitution, i.e. the safeguarding of national independence, the defence of national sovereignty, and the defence of territorial unity of the country.

1.1.3 Rejuvenation in other elite segments

The Algerian civil administration, like all other state institutions, had for its first three decades been dominated by ex-revolutionaries who had been rewarded with posts for their efforts in the liberation struggle. Yet, by the beginning of the new millennium the vast majority of the revolutionary generation had retired – either because they had reached retirement age or because they had long ago profited from the generous early retirement regulation for *cadres supérieurs*.¹⁴ As a result, more and more director generals of ministries and other administrative top cadres came from the second generation. With the rejuvenation of ministers under Benflis, moreover, their close collaborators – usually political appointees – also tended to become younger.¹⁵ Even in the absence of reliable quantitative data, it could thus be speculated that the civil administration in the Bouteflika era was dominated by the second generation. The only larger set of data revealing age structures in the civil administration made available to this author was for the *walis*, the prefects of provinces, and on the secretary generals of the *wilayaat*, the second-in-command in the provinces. Though *walis* could generally not be considered to belong to the PRE – one exception was the *wali* of Algiers, who was close to Bouteflika and who shared personal responsibility for the harassment of the FLN and the dubious legal efforts to weaken Benflis in 2003¹⁶ – the age structure of the corps of *walis* could be taken as an illustration of general tendencies in the upper echelons of the civil administration. Out of forty-eight *walis* (forty-seven men and one woman), twelve in 2002 belonged to the first generation, thirty-six to the second generation, and none to the third.

Upward mobility for the third generation seemed easier outside state institutions. Prominent figures in the Kabyle citizens' movement came mainly from the third generation, and so did a high number of independent union cadres. Several Algerian newspapers in 2003 had editors-in-chief who belonged to the third generation; all others were headed by members of the second generation. Elites from the private sector with political influence, by contrast, still tended to belong to the revolutionary generation or the second generation. Rafik Khalifa, who had been Algeria's most high-profile young business elite before his empire collapsed in 2003, had been an exception. Yet, several less high-profile third-generation elites with growing economic weight and, linked to that, potential political influence, could be found in the most influential business lobby, the Forum des Chefs d'Entreprise (FCE). Business associations with at times considerable influence such as the FCE or the Confédération Algérienne du Patronat were, however, headed by members of the revolutionary generation, with the exception of the Confédération Nationale du Patronat Algérien, presided over by a member of the third generation.

1.2 Criteria for recruitment

In contrast to many other Arab countries, the young members of the Algerian PRE were not recruited from among core elite or high-profile second circle offspring. Indeed, it was remarkable that none of the core elite's offspring could be found in top positions in civil state institutions. Though *décideur* Mohamed Lamari, for instance, had a son in the army, it was not evident that the latter would move to the uppermost echelons in the near future. Developments such as in Egypt or Libya, where the prime decision-makers' sons appeared to be groomed for succession, seemed unlikely in Algeria – the president did not even have a son. Most of the offspring of the core elite had received at least part of their higher education abroad (mainly in France or the UK), and after their return went into the private sector in Algeria rather than into the army or politics. This strong move into the private sector could be explained with personal financial interests of core elites and their families. But it could also be taken as an indicator for where the core elite assumed (future) influence and power to lie primarily.

Even if the third generation of elites had not been recruited from among the offspring of the core elite and of high-profile second circle elites, they came almost exclusively from certain privileged layers of society, in many cases from families that already had members within the PRE. This was even true for those elites that could be considered contesting elites and that had been pushed into the PRE through a social movement, such as was the case with the leaders of the Kabyle protest movement.¹⁷ Of fifty-one third-generation elites interviewed, forty-seven fulfilled one or more of the following partly overlapping criteria:¹⁸ (1) descendant of a well-known revolutionary family, or member of the 'extended family' of the revolutionaries, the *famille révolutionnaire*; (2) descendant of a high FLN-functionary, or a high administrative

cadre, such as head of a state-owned enterprise; (3) belonging to a family considered to be local 'nobility', whether (post-)revolutionary 'notables' (such as local party functionaries or *anciens moudjahidine* turned entrepreneurs, that is those Martinez (2000: 24ff.) termed 'military entrepreneurs'),¹⁹ former colonial and pre-colonial mercantile elites or tribal notables; (4) descendants of religious 'nobility', whether marabouts families and/or sheiks of *zaouïas* or the founders of the Association des Oulémas. The apparent exclusion of actors from non-privileged social groups from the PRE could be explained by, among other factors, the Arabization of the school system and the monopolization and arbitrary expansion of historical legitimacy by first and second circle elites.

1.2.1 Arabization as a mechanism for exclusion

The Arabization of the education system, which started in 1965 and was completed by the late 1980s, severely hampered the social mobility of Algerians who did not grow up in a privileged French-speaking household or in a Francophone urban milieu, or attend schools in France. French had remained the lingua franca in the political and civil administration,²⁰ the army's general command and the private and public economic sectors, despite several decrees put forward – the last one in 1995 – that demanded the use of Arabic and threatened sanctions in case of non-compliance. Generals, ministers, top cadres in the administration and directors of enterprises made no secret of the fact that French was a sine qua non for promotions into the upper spheres of the Algerian system. Kadri (2001: 104–5) concluded from a quantitative survey that it was generally easier for Francophones to find posts.²¹ At the same time, cadres in high but not top positions made every effort to convey the notion of Standard Arabic being the main working language, and it was not uncommon to find official documents in Arabic that had a French syntax because they had been written in French first and then translated pro forma.²² As Belkahla (2001: 146ff.), who studied the implementation of three waves of Arabization policies in Sonelgaz, the state provider of electricity and gas, demonstrated, these half-hearted efforts at Arabization were both unsuccessful and costly.

Ironically, French seemed to be an asset even among those who were strong defenders of Arabization. In Islamist parties, mastering French was, judging from the high number of top cadres who spoke it beautifully, a plus for one's career – even if party leaders, such as the MRN's Abdallah Djaballah, refused to speak it publicly for ideological reasons. To a limited extent, the only space open to actors with little knowledge of French was in independent unions, independent NGOs, the Arabic press and Islamist parties. This tendency was illustrated by the fact that third-generation elites barely speaking French – only one out of ten interviewees – came from one of these domains. Most other interviewees were either Francophone or bilingual, the latter having difficulties determining which language they considered

to be their mother tongue. The same interviewee often gave different answers depending on whether he filled in this author's questionnaire prior to an interview or whether he was asked in the course of an interview what language he felt most comfortable speaking and writing.²³ A huge majority of the third-generation interviewees according to their own assessment were better with written French than Standard Arabic. As far as oral skills went, a third of the interviewees said they spoke Standard Arabic as well as or better than French. Over half of the interviewees put their oral French skills at the same level as their command of Algerian-Arabic or Kabyle-Berber dialect, and one out of ten claimed to speak French better than anything else.

Whether the Arabization policy was a deliberate move to create a mechanism of exclusion and to create compliant social classes, as Benrabah (1999: 145) argues, remains difficult to judge. But the effect of this policy was indeed the substantial reduction of the number of members of the third generation who could potentially become politically relevant. What Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) had concluded based on the French case, that the education system contributed to reproducing the existing social order, applied to the Algerian case as well. However, for a short time during the heydays of the Arabophone FIS, the Arabization policy appeared to have backfired on the Francophone elite, for many of those who had been taught Arabic by teachers from Egypt, Syria and other Arab countries identified strongly not only with the Arabic language but also with conservative and/or religious values imported by these teachers.

1.2.2 Historical legitimacy as a criterion for inclusion

A second important reason for the reproduction of the current elite and of existing social hierarchies was the monopolization of historical legitimacy by incumbent elites, and successful efforts at turning such legitimacy into a hereditary quality. Originally, carriers of historical legitimacy had been all those Algerians actively involved in the fight for independence: that is, those with a so-called *carte* attesting to their status. These *anciens moudjahidine*, and to a certain extent their children, officially referred to as their '*ayants droits*' (those having rights) as well as the children of the *chouhada* (martyrs) were entitled to a wide range of benefits.²⁴ In practice, there were enormous hierarchies among revolutionaries, depending on the position they had held in the liberation movement, the post-war status and position of those they fought under or with, and the geographical location of their struggle (within the Algerian borders, in the surrounding countries, or in Europe). These differences were not only reflected in the amount of material benefits received but also in terms of symbolic prestige that rubbed off on the (extended) families of prominent revolutionaries and that translated into power, or at least posts.

Though historical legitimacy according to Entelis (1983: 111) became less important as a criterion for recruitment in the late 1970s, it experienced a powerful comeback in the early 1990s. The term '*famille révolutionnaire*' was

introduced, and belonging to this family implicitly extended to organizations linked to the fight against terrorism, such as that of the victims of terrorism, Organization Nationale des Victimes du Terrorisme, and to regime-supporting mass organizations, even if these organizations contested the privileges of the revolutionaries by claiming the status of martyr for relatives killed by armed Islamist groups. Official rhetoric increasingly framed the revolutionary family as synonymous to ‘those defending the republic against Islamists’. The Islamists on the other hand were – whether wrong or right – presented as sons of *harkis*: those that had fought with the French against the liberation movement.²⁵ The frame of reference of contesting elites was, ironically, the same one: that is, the revolution and those that in their eyes were carriers of ‘true historical legitimacy’ and the ‘real values of the revolution’. Roberts (2002a: 27) rightly pointed out a strong link between an individual’s capacity to offer programmatic opposition to the regime: that is, opposition aimed at ‘certain definite political changes’, and the individual’s historical legitimacy.

While historical legitimacy was an asset for a career within a contesting elite segment, for instance in Islamist parties, and thus for entering the PRE, it was the core and second circle elites that ultimately decided who belonged to the *famille révolutionnaire*, and who was co-opted into and promoted within the PRE on that basis. The CNT, the quasi-parliament installed by the HCE after the coup d’état, had included primarily members of the *famille révolutionnaire*. When new faces with a meagre or no political record were being recruited into formal political institutions their link to the *famille révolutionnaire* usually served and sufficed to justify their appointment.²⁶ Among the third-generation elites from the FLN and RND elected to parliament in 2002, several were cadres or presidents of organizations such as the Scouts Muslemans, the Union Nationale de la Jeunesse Algérienne or the Organisation Nationale des Enfants de Moudjahidine, which had been founded in the 1990s to extend historical legitimacy to children of former *moudjahidine*.²⁷ Being a cadre in any of the ex-parti unique mass organizations or in new organizations modelled on them and having a link – even if somewhat fictitious – to the revolution were excellent assets for entry into the PRE and for upward mobility within the PRE.²⁸ Of the third-generation RND and FLN elites interviewed, every single one was part of the *famille révolutionnaire*. Zartman (1972: 211) had diagnosed three decades earlier, that there was ‘no legitimacy outside of revolutionary symbols, groups and policies’ in what he called Algeria’s ‘revolutionary politics’ after independence. Even if this statement no longer applied in the same absoluteness, historical legitimacy was still a strong factor.

1.2.3 Further criteria for inclusion into the PRE

While both historical legitimacy and the command of French were important assets for potentially entering the PRE and upward mobility within the PRE,

they alone did not appear to suffice for recruitment. Most third-generation members of the PRE possessed a number of additional qualities that played in their favour. Many of these characteristics related to their family background beyond the symbolic capital drawn from their historical legitimacy, and included symbolic capital drawn from the status of 'local nobility' in all its forms. Several third-generation MPs interviewed stated that they were courted by more than one party and eventually received excellent list places because their families were economically potent and thus influential on the local or regional level. Roughly a third of the third-generation interviewees had a relative – usually a brother, uncle or cousin – in a high position in the elite segment they were in, be it a political party or a specific branch of the civil administration.

The role of geographic origin in the recruitment of elites, which had been enormously important for upward mobility of revolutionary and second-generation elites in the upper echelons of the *parti unique* system, in the civil administration and the army,²⁹ was difficult to determine in the case of the third generation. Bouteflika clearly displayed a regional bias for western Algeria in his appointments – but all his (high-profile) appointments were members of the second generation. His predecessor Zeroual had surrounded himself with people from the east in the presidency and, according to army sources,³⁰ strongly favoured eastern Algerians in his appointment of officers. Overall, though, regionalism in the army appeared to have been declining ever since the revolutionary generation's youngest members, whose geographical backgrounds covered a broader spectrum, were fully in command as of the early 1990s.³¹

Whether recruiting cadres from one's own region was a widespread practice in the civil administration was again difficult to assess. The impression gathered from interviews with cadres in seven ministries pointed to the continuation of the 'Kabyle bias' the administration had exhibited since independence, not least because of the Kabyles' generally good command of French. A recruitment criterion widely rumoured to be significant but impossible to verify was closeness to *les services*: that is, the DRS. The sector in which these allegations were most difficult to dismiss was the private sector, because imports – ranging from raw materials and technical and technological supply to manufactured goods – appeared to be under the control of the DRS.³² As far as careers in formal political institutions were concerned, the only thing one could safely assume for an individual's chances of upward mobility was that it was better not to have enemies in the upper echelons of the intelligence services. The appointment of cabinet members, for instance, depended on a nod from the DRS.³³

Finally, high qualifications and merit were among the assets for recruitment but their significance seemed to vary greatly. In the upper echelons of the administration there was a high and growing demand for qualified people, mainly in ministries with international exposure and/or dealing with economic affairs: the team of between five and fifteen advisers of each minister usually comprised at least two or three highly qualified third-generation

elites.³⁴ However, the institution in which qualifications and merits appeared to be more significant for promotion than all afore-mentioned was the army.³⁵ 'Extended' or 'inherited' historical legitimacy clearly did not suffice for a promotion in the state institution widely perceived, by Algerians and foreign observers alike, to be the most professional and best functioning. As Roberts (2002a: 25) noted, 'technical expertise and the ethic of professionalization' became elements relied on by the army leadership to fill the legitimacy gap that opened up for the generations not having fought the war.

2 Formative experiences and political socialization

2.1 The revolutionary and second generations: marked by the war and by nation- and state-building

While there was a certain continuity in recruitment criteria and, as a result, in mechanisms of elite reproduction, the third generation's common formative experiences and political socialization differed strongly from those of the preceding generations. Both the formative experiences and the political socialization of the revolutionary generation were analysed amply and excellently by Quandt (1969) and Harbi (2001) among others, and need little further explanation. Members of this generation found in the PRE – whether contesting or incumbent – in the Boutflika era were marked by experiences of discrimination under colonialism, the long and extremely bloody war of independence, and the rivalries and rifts the war had generated among Algerians. These rifts long survived the war and created a spirit of secret, suspicion and rivalry (Harbi 2001: 328). Elites of this generation drew their collective sense of legitimacy from the successful anti-colonial struggle, and they constructed their individual sense of legitimacy as leaders on their individual merit or specific activity during the war, for instance, from having belonged to the prestigious MALG. Those that had embarked on a not too well looked upon career in the French army prior to their resistance to the colonizer – that is, a majority of the core elite during the first term of Bouteflika's presidency – banked on presenting themselves as the professional officers responsible for developing the ALN, a corps of politicized moudjahidine, into the ANP, an army of professional technicians.³⁶

The second generation, i.e. those born between the mid-1940s and the late 1950s, such as Ali Benflis and Ahmed Ouyahia, still had strong memories of the war³⁷ but had also been significantly formed by an era of hope: the euphoria of independence and 'the golden years of Boumedienne' involving state-building, ambitious industrialization projects and high oil prices that allowed for an allocation of social benefits to virtually the entire generation. This generation, moreover, was marked by the era of Arab nationalism, the Arab–Israeli wars in 1967 and 1973 – that is, the cause of Palestine – and by the Cold War and Algeria's political ties and exchange programmes with numerous socialist countries.

Upward mobility had been widespread in this generation, even though the educational system in the 1970s had still featured private schools and ‘showed an imbalance in favour of those whose families already [held] wealth, status and power’ (Zartman 1975: 279). This generation had enjoyed generous state scholarships to France, Eastern Europe, the Arabic- and English-speaking worlds,³⁸ and job opportunities were abundant. The education system’s development towards mass education and the step-by-step Arabization of the education sector as of 1965 and of the official sphere as of 1973 turned command of Modern Standard Arabic, rarely found in the revolutionary generation, into an asset during the early 1970s and opened channels for ambitious young people with non-Francophone and less privileged backgrounds.³⁹ Among the institutions producing elites were technical and engineering schools, the École Nationale d’Administration (ENA), the Faculté de Droit in Algiers, and the newly established army academies. Networks based on familial, regional and revolutionary affiliations, as well as mass organizations such as the UGTA, the UNJA and the Scouts Muslemans (part of the UNJA until the early 1990s) and the UNFA, were prime channels of upward mobility.⁴⁰ The opportunities offered to the second generation had inspired a sentiment among this generation that they could ‘never give back to the state what it had given’ to them.⁴¹ Hence, it was not surprising that the second generation of elites had – with the notable exception of Islamists and radical left-wingers – turned out to be obedient rather than rebellious and had remained in the shadow of its heroic fathers, particularly of one strong man: Boumedienne. Also, hardly any representatives of this generation had ascended to key positions in the FLN or the administration until the late 1980s, none made it to the top echelons of the army until the late 1990s and none had occupied the post of president.

2.2 The third generation: a product of disillusionment

The main common historic experiences of the third generation of elites stood in strong contrast to those of the second generation. This generation had been marked by a chain of primarily discouraging or violent developments. Zartman’s (1983: 14) claim that ‘successive elite generations in Arab North Africa have been socialized negatively by their experiences toward government’ applied to most members of this elite generation. In that sense, the third generation had more in common with the revolutionary generation than with the second generation. The economic decline and increasing corruption and mismanagement of public funds during the Chadli years that had accelerated socio-economic problems – such as lack of housing, rampant unemployment and increased social tensions – provided an important backdrop to the teenage years of this elite generation, even if it was not directly affected by these developments. As of 1988, however, a sequence of events affected the privileged and non-privileged of this generation alike: the (youth) riots in October 1988 and the brutal response to them by the security forces;

the ensuing three short years of democratic opening that were accompanied by the euphoria of a political spring but also by increased social tensions linked to the ascendance of the Islamists; the military coup after the FIS election victory; the assassination of President Boudiaf, who had represented a ray of hope; the outbreak of civil war and the massive violence against civilians throughout the 1990s. Not necessarily a milestone or turning point, but nevertheless an experience that left an imprint on this generation, was a sense of being cut off from the rest of the world – be it because virtually all foreigners had left Algeria by the mid-1990s, because visas to foreign countries were more difficult to attain, or because more than 400,000 Algerians with higher diplomas left the country.⁴²

The third generation, moreover, was affected by the decline of the education system which had been completely (but poorly) Arabized by the early 1980s – with the exception of the natural sciences at the university level – and which produced what educated Algerians referred to as ‘illiterates in two languages’. With state scholarships to foreign countries becoming scarce, and with private schools not having been legally recognized for almost three decades, this generation of elites was educated almost exclusively in Algerian public schools⁴³ and had studied at Algiers University, in many cases political science or medicine. Thanks to the internet and to satellite television, this elite generation was one with more access to information on and from the world outside Algeria. Yet, because of the civil war and because of the decrease in scholarships to foreign countries, it had less direct international exposure and exchange than previous generations experienced and less than young elites from most other Arab countries had. Army elites constituted the sole exception, for they continued to be sent abroad for training, and at military academies English was taught as a second language as of the mid-1980s, gradually replacing Russian, with officers were being sent to the United States for training.⁴⁴ In terms of elite training and international exposure, the army was therefore far ahead of the civilian sector.

The impact of the above developments on third-generation elites was particularly evident in the interviews conducted with PRE members of this generation. Of the fifty-one interviewees from this generation asked what they considered to be the three events or developments – political or not political – that marked them, almost half named October 1988 (cf. Figure V.2) These interviewees came from political camps as different as the FLN, the Islamist MRN and the radically secular RCD, and their assessment of what these uprisings implied varied from ‘a shock and the beginning of the deterioration of the country’ and the ‘destruction of what our parents built with their blood’ to ‘a painful event that marked the beginning of the short period of freedom’. Two interviewees, both leaders of the Kabyle protest movement, said they had participated in the riots.

The experience mentioned second most often was terrorism, meaning violence by armed Islamist groups. Of the thirteen interviewees bringing up this issue, all but three came from regime-close and/or secular parties. Four of

the thirteen had lost close relatives, either in bomb attacks or in kidnappings by what were believed to be ‘Islamist terrorists’. Even when ‘terrorism’ was not mentioned explicitly as an experience that left a strong imprint, the effects of the violence between regime elites and Islamists, such as the isolation experienced by those who stayed in Algeria and could not get visas to foreign countries any more, came up at one point or another in most of the interviews.

Eleven interviewees – ranging from Islamist party cadres to Kabyle protest movement leaders and ex-cadres of the UNEA⁴⁵ – cited ongoing regime repression and/or ethnic discrimination before 1989 as an experience that left a strong imprint on them. Eight interviewees – seven of them belonging to the FLN and/or cadres in mass organizations – said the death of Boumedienne had been an event that marked them in the sense that it was an enormous loss for the country; one interviewee, a top cadre in the FFS, cited it as a ‘moment of relief’. The shock of the assassination of Mohamed Boudiaf – on whom a wide spectrum of actors had pinned their hopes – was also listed by eight interviewees, contesters and regime elites alike. Seven interviewees mentioned the interruption of the electoral process in January 1992. Five of them – four contesters and one regime-close elite – judged it to have been a negative event; two others, both RND cadres, remembered it as a moment of great relief. Six interviewees said the *infatih* (opening, used here in the sense of political liberalization) between 1989 and 1991 had influenced them strongly in that it gave them a ‘taste of freedom’; two interviewees called it ‘the period of euphoria’. The Berber Spring, the bloodily repressed Berber uprising in 1980, was an event that strongly marked Kabyles of this generation; six interviewees with a Kabyle background mentioned it. For most Kabyle interviewees the assassination of the

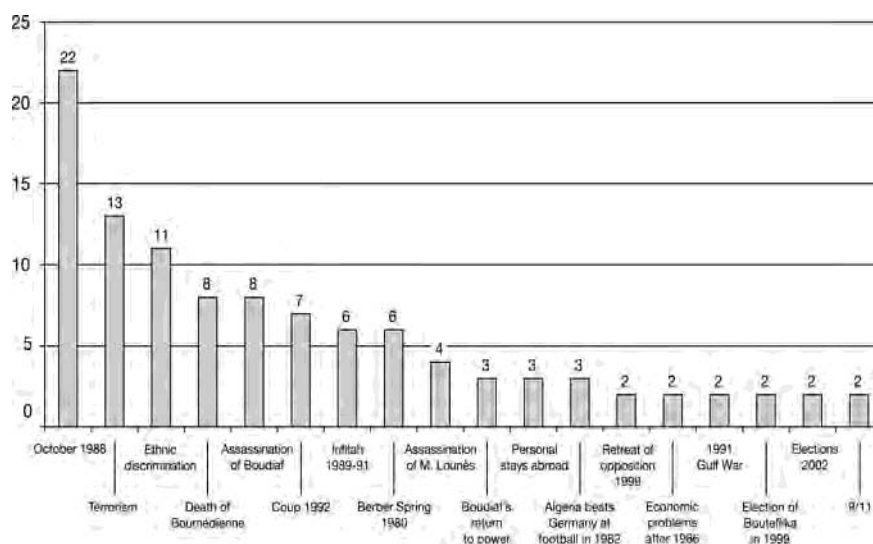


Figure V.2 Formative experiences of third-generation elites.

highly politicized Kabyle singer Matoub Lounès in 1998 – widely attributed to the '*pouvoir*' (the regime; literally 'the power') – was a milestone in their lives.

Finally, a number of events were mentioned two or three times, such as the return of Boudiaf from Moroccan exile in 1992 to take over the presidency of the HCE. The 1999 election of Bouteflika was qualified (by RND top cadres) as a turning point in that it marked the beginning of the improvement of the overall situation in the country. Similarly, the 2002 elections were cited by two FLN cadres as a step towards democracy. Last but not least, the terror attacks of 9/11 were brought up by two fierce anti-Islamists as an event that finally made the world understand the experience Algeria had gone through in the 1990s. Interestingly, the *Concorde civile* was cited by one person only. Developments related to the education system were usually not mentioned explicitly but they took centre-stage in the interviews when it came to issues such as the Algerian identity.

Overall, the common experiences, even if they were interpreted in different ways, produced an elite generation that differed from its predecessors in a number of ways. Interviewees perceived themselves in comparison to their fathers and grandfathers as 'more autonomous'; 'more radical because we have less to lose'; 'speaking more as individuals while they spoke more as a collective'; 'more impatient, because for us it is no longer *al-hamdu l'illah* [Thank God] we have independence', 'with less fear of expressing our views', 'we call a spade a spade, the older generations are timid'.

The revolutionary generation was described by several interviewees as stuck in revolutionary culture and lacking a pluralist spirit. A majority of the interviewees, moreover, made critical remarks about the fact that the revolutionary generation had such a hard time handing over power to younger generations. As one interviewee put it: 'They are entrenched in paternalism and do not allow the children to grow up.' Another complained that they 'want to orchestrate the succession by photocopying themselves'. Moreover, the revolutionaries were accused of being a generation 'with a spirit of vengeance, and preoccupied with the settling of old accounts'. Yet the second generation was viewed even more negatively by many interview partners. It was seen as an elite generation that did not have to fight a war first but was 'born with a red carpet' and 'profited from the system without building anything for the future generations'. One interviewee summarized it the following way: 'The second generation found the cake in front of it and helped itself, but did not leave anything to us.' Several interviewees reproached this generation with 'accepting the system', with 'being corrupted' and with 'seeing what is wrong but not doing anything about it'. Surprisingly, these critical remarks about preceding generations came not only from contesting elites but – even if to a lesser extent and not without hesitation – from top cadres in the FLN and RND. The diverging views on the preceding generations as well as the different ways of interpreting common experiences were not surprising but merely testified to the variety of currents existing in one actual generation.

3 The different faces of the third generation

The commonalities in formative experiences, educational background and recruitment patterns of politically relevant elites from the third generation stood in strong contrast to sharp divergences in their political attitudes. Virtually all common historical experiences were interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the political socialization of elites. These differences reflected themselves in the terminology used to describe these experiences. Members of the FFS and leaders of some human rights NGOs described what had happened in Algeria after 1992 as a 'civil war'; semi-opposition forces, such as the moderate Islamist MSP, either used 'the violence of the 1980s' or shared the regime elites' terminology: 'the period of terrorism'. The interruption of the elections was seen by cadres of the FFS and of Wafa and by several independent union leaders as a 'coup d'état', while FLN, RND and RCD cadres as well as young members of the PRE coming from the private sector tended to use the phrase 'when the army saved the republic'.

Clearly, the third generation, an 'actual generation' in the Mannheimian (1952: 305–6) sense, could be divided into what Mannheim termed 'different antagonistic generation units'. In the Algerian case the media as well as researchers tended to subdivide the elite along binary categories such as *éradicateurs* versus *réconciliateurs*,⁴⁶ or Arabophones/*arabisants* versus Francophones/*francisants*,⁴⁷ or Islamists versus seculars. Such bipolar perceptions ignored the complex cross-cutting political, ethnic, linguistic and regional cleavages. Moreover, they neglected additional dimensions such as outlooks on economic reforms. Because they presented a simplified picture of the different currents within the PRE, their explanatory power for developments within the elite as well as for the prospects of system transformation was limited.

Another common way of categorizing Algeria's politically relevant actors was a tripolar one that placed the actors in one of three camps: nationalists, Islamists or democrats, whereby democrats and in some cases nationalists were also called republicans.⁴⁸ Such a categorization was again of little analytical value since it insinuated that neither nationalists nor Islamists could be democrats, and on the other hand established that there were democrats but ignored the fact that a majority of these 'democrats' was not willing to allow for participation of all formally legalized political actors. These categories, moreover, again excluded economic variables.

The categorization of actors presented in this study is based on a wider spectrum of variables and provides for a more nuanced picture of political actors in Algeria. The ten variables used were: (1) family background;⁴⁹ (2) political socialization;⁵⁰ (3) role models; (4) perception of the country's problems; (5–7) attitudes towards three strategic issues: privatization of state industries, education sector reforms⁵¹ and participation of all political actors that claimed to adhere to democratic rules; (8) perception of themselves vis-à-vis the revolutionaries; (9) perception of a desirable national

identity for Algeria; and (10) strategies for bringing about the desired changes. While questions 3 to 7 and 9 were asked directly, variables 1, 2 and 8 were constructed from answers given at different points during the interview. Overall, the variables thus primarily reflected voiced attitudes and perceptions.

Based on the above variables, five different elite types could be distinguished in the third generation: the neo-dinosaur, the nationalist reformer, the Islamist reformer, the radical democrat and the neo-revolutionary (cf. Table V.1). Since these elite types are abstracted constructions they will be termed 'ideal-types'.⁵² The subsequent presentation of 'real life' prototypes for the respective ideal-type categories exemplifies the fluidity between these 'sterile' categories once they are confronted with empirical reality. At the same time, though, the prototypes demonstrate that the ideal-types, despite their abstraction and purity, strongly reflect empirical trends. While no quantitative analysis was done on the balance of power between the different elite ideal-types, the random sample of politically relevant elites taken here, as well as the information gathered from close readings of the daily printed press, strongly suggested that the balance of power in the third generation favoured the nationalist reformer.

3.1 The neo-dinosaur

3.1.1 Ideal-type

The 'neo-dinosaur' was the most reform-averse of the third-generation elite ideal-types, and displayed a strong nostalgia for the past rather than visions for the future. He was born into an FLN family and was the offspring of a well-known revolutionary. While he had grown up bilingual (French and Algerian dialect), he tended to support all Arabization efforts and to have conservative values in all questions pertaining to the social order or touching upon religion. His discourse nevertheless was anti-Islamist and he was opposed to any form of reconciliation with the FIS or similar political forces. Important spaces for his early political socialization were the mass organizations UNJA and, later, the UGTA that socialized him into the *parti unique* system and that functioned as a channel for upward mobility. The neo-dinosaur's prime role model was Houari Boumedienne and, to a lesser extent, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and he saw himself in the populist nationalist tradition of these leaders. At the same time he understood himself as the natural and true inheritor of the revolutionaries, for whom his admiration and respect was enormous. His views on what constituted the desirable Algerian national identity were also in the tradition of those of the Boumediennists: Algeria was seen as an Arabic country with Islam as the state religion, and as a country with a socialist outlook. In line with the changes made in the official identity – that is, with the anchoring of *amazighité* (Berberness) in the constitution – the neo-dinosaur, in contrast to

<i>Family background</i>	<i>Most important agents of political socialization</i>	<i>Role models</i>	<i>Perception of self vis-à-vis revolutionaries</i>	<i>Desirable 'national identity'</i>
<i>Neo-dinosaur</i>	Strong revolutionary record (Very) privileged <i>Nomenklatura</i> (FLN- functionaries, top bureaucrats or militaries), <i>francisant</i>	Family FLN Mass organizations	<i>Génération de Novembre 54</i> Houari Boumedienne Gamal Abdel Nasser	Proud to be that natural inheritor of the <i>génération de Novembre 54</i> and of those revolutionaries who built the state
	Strong revolutionary record Very privileged Educated Local 'notables' **** Excellent ties to <i>Nomenklatura</i>	FLN or RND Regime supporting NGOs Mass organizations Stays abroad	<i>Génération de Novembre 54</i> Mohamed Boudiaf Charles de Gaulle Mahatma Gandhi	Continuing in the revolutionaries' tradition and in their spirit
<i>Nationalist reformer</i>				Arab-Muslim-Berber with a Mediterranean and African component and including remnants of colonial past
<i>Islamist reformer</i>	Revolutionary record but often no card Fairly privileged Some ties to <i>Nomenklatura</i> <i>Arabisant</i> or <i>francisant</i>	Mosque Clandestine student movements Islamic NGOs FIS, later MSP, Ennahda or MRN	Hassan al-Banna Jamal al-Din al-Afghani Mahatma Gandhi Malek Bennabi	Inheritor of those revolutionaries who promoted 'true' Islamic and democratic values of the revolution, and who were betrayed by state- builders
<i>Radical democrat</i>	Revolutionary record Fairly privileged Educated Urban Rather <i>francisant</i> than <i>arabisant</i>	Clandestine high school and student activities RAJ Regime critical NGOs For Kabyles: family, Berber Spring, MCB, RCD or FFS	Nelson Mandela Oluf Palme Mahatma Gandhi Martin Luther King Jr Hocine Ait-Ahmed	Inheritor of those revolutionaries who promoted 'true' democratic and universalist values of the revolution, and who were betrayed by state-builders
<i>Neo- revolutionary</i>	Revolutionary record but often no card Modest to moderately privileged Mainly <i>berberisant</i>	Clandestine activity in high school/at university; Berber Spring MCB Kabyle protest movement	Che Guevara Matoub Lounès Fethat M'Henni Mouloud Mammeri Abane Ramdane	Fulfilling the mission of the 'true' revolutionaries with universalist rather than Arabo- Muslim values who had been killed or sidelined by state- builders
				A mélange of Algeria's historic experiences Not reducible to one language and religion Berber, African, Mediterranean just as much as Arab-Muslim

Table V.1 Third-generation elite 'ideal-types' (Part 1)

<i>Neo-dinosaur</i>	Youth unemployment Security situation Threats to national unity	Yes to improvement of educational infrastructure No to undoing Arabization Continuity with adjustments	Negative, because of loss of jobs and because seen as sellout to foreigners	Almost fully achieved since 1997 (multi-party parliament) Needs consolidation only, which can be reached through education	State programmes for the young Investments in educational infrastructure
<i>Nationalist reformer</i>	Market reforms Rule of law Rebuilding confidence in state institutions Security situation/national reconciliation	Yes to changes in content and mode of teaching No to a completely occidentalized system	Positive, with the exception of Sonatrach	In the process of democratizing but still a way to go 2002 parliamentary elections a positive move towards democracy	Gradual reforms in the economy, the judiciary, the administration Enforcement of good governance Building confidence in state institutions
<i>Islamist reformer</i>	Market reforms Fight against corruption Stronger adherence to 'values of Islam' Separation of powers Rule of law Democratization	No to any changes that aim at occidentalizing Algerian society and alienating Arab-Muslim culture.	Positive, for all sectors albeit with reservations regarding the transparency of such a process	Still mainly a façade because parliament weak and not representative and no separation of powers	Gradually changing the regime from within Educating and mobilizing population on rights Insistence on clean elections and separation of powers Strengthening the private sector
<i>Radical democrat</i>	Role of army in politics Mismanagement of resources National reconciliation based on democratization Rule of law Human rights	Yes to all changes that promote universal and civil values, to create a secular school No to private schools that will further deepen social cleavages	Negative, because of loss of jobs and further enrichment of the top elites	A façade	Transitional government involving all political forces, including the FIS Election of representative and legitimate institutions
<i>Neo-revolutionary</i>	Repression by corrupt and murderous elites Mismanagement of country's resources Superimposing of Arab-Muslim identity	Negative, because regime not willing to implement much needed reforms to everyone's benefit.	Negative, because only serves incumbent top elites	A façade at best	Conscientization of masses Mass uprisings Election boycotts

Table V.1 continued

his mental forefathers, included a 'Berber component' in what he thought should and did constitute the country's identity.

Algeria's most urgent problems in his eyes were found in three areas. First, the 'young' in general, and youth unemployment more specifically, needed to be dealt with urgently. A second problem diagnosed was the absence of full security, i.e. the 'persistence of terrorism'. The third issue of great concern to him was the threat to national unity and sovereignty through foreign intervention – be it in the Kabyle uprisings, behind which he saw foreign forces (namely France), or in the national economy. Privatization of state-owned industries was viewed as a sellout to foreigners and as an anti-social step. Reforms in the education sector were not deemed a high priority if they concerned content and threatened Arabization, but seen as desirable if they meant an improvement of educational infrastructure. Finally, democracy was seen as having arrived with the definite demise of the single-party system through multi-party parliamentary elections in 1997; it now only needed some consolidation. Democracy deficits were diagnosed as stemming exclusively from a lack of adequate instruction and education.

As a result of the above credo and because of a well-founded fear of being the big loser if reforms were to be implemented, the political programme of the neo-dinosaur consisted primarily of impeding structural reforms in the administrative, education and economic sectors on the one hand, while demanding state programmes to alleviate socio-economic misery on the other hand. The neo-dinosaur thus was perfect proof for Mannheim's (1952: 297, n.1) argument that 'nothing is more false than the usual assumption . . . that the younger generation is "progressive" and the old generation *eo ipso* conservative'.

The neo-dinosaur was usually an FLN, or in some cases an RND member, and he was found among third-generation elites in the cabinet, parliament, public administration, unions affiliated with the UGTA and in the various ex-FLN satellites. In many cases his educational and professional background was that of a professional administrator, though he could also be an engineer, a teacher, a doctor or a lawyer. While his chances at upward mobility in the early 2000s were still better than those of all other elite types, with the exception of the nationalist reformer discussed below, it was unlikely that he would become part of the core elite in the future. His agenda and discourse – drawing from and oriented towards the *parti unique* and state economy past – and his efforts to block most reforms were too anachronistic and *dépassé* for him to be recruited into the top echelons of the Algerian system by a core elite increasingly concerned with conveying an image of a state in the last stages of a democratic and market-oriented transition.

3.1.2 *Prototype*

A.B.⁵³ was both president of an ex-*parti unique* mass organization with over 450,000 members and an FLN member of parliament in 2002. He was born

in 1962 in Batna (eastern Algeria) into a family that had belonged to the FLN since the early days of the war of independence; one of his uncles had been the ALN commander of a *wilaya*. During high school A.B. was a cadre in the scouts and representative of the UGTA at his school. Later he studied medicine and became involved in the student movement UNEA that had again moved closer to the regime after the political opening. As a protégé of Chadli Bendjedid, he had been the first third-generation member to be elected to the FLN's Comité Central, the party's second highest body, when he was twenty-three years old. A.B. described his reasons for entering politics, his achievements and his goals in the following words:⁵⁴

I became involved in politics as early as high school. I wanted to be in a position of responsibility, and to have a post that allowed me to push through what I wanted. One of my biggest successes was at university when we managed to change regulations regarding the repetition of exams; those who failed exams three times did not have to leave university any more. I see it as my duty to defend the interests of the young. In parliament, we managed to push the minister of youth and sports to resign because he was not doing anything good for the young. What Algeria needs most now are emergency employment programmes for the young. If the young have work, all the social problems will be gone. But if we privatize industries and other state enterprises we will have an even bigger employment problem – this is why I am against it. Also, these enterprises belong to all Algerian people. We do not want foreigners to own them. Do you know how much the French own here?

A.B. was generally sceptical of reforms in most sectors and did not conclude from the problems he identified that there was a need for political reforms. He was of the opinion that Algeria was at 'the end of transition process towards democracy'. Though he acknowledged the need for 'some adjustments', for instance in the judiciary, he stressed the importance of continuity. This credo was also reflected in his attitude towards the highly contested suggestions for reforms in the education sector.

Algerian schoolchildren should not be taught religion *à la iranienne*, because that is what led to terrorism. At the same time, we want them to be Algerians and we do not want to make little Frenchmen out of them by giving the French language priority in the new curricula. We have to be very careful how we reform the education system. I am generally against all radical changes. What we need is continuity with some adjustments because we are on the right track.

Apart from youth unemployment, Algeria in A.B.'s view was facing two major challenges: eliminating terrorism and 'returning the country to its dignity'. He implicitly criticized the president for being too soft on

terrorists, and he accused those running the country since the death of Boumedienne of having undermined the dignity and grandeur Algeria had in the 1970s. A.B.'s main points of reference, however, were 'the revolutionaries'.

We owe them everything, and they have been very generous to us. There is absolutely no rupture between generations – on the contrary there is a marriage between them. There is much we can learn from older generations. It is an honour to be in this FLN and to belong to this family. Within the FLN there was more pluralism and democracy than we have today with all those political parties. It was possible to express views more freely than today . . . But the press today is also writing too negatively about the situation. We have in fact democratized, we have changed presidents in elections. I am angry at these journalists who always criticize everything. They should be more professional. There still is much to do, but we are better than all other Arab countries, and they have to write that. In twenty years, Algeria will be a role model for the Arab world and for Africa, and a real social and economic power in Africa and the Arab world.

In one point mainly, A.B. differed from the above-sketched ideal-type of the neo-dinosaur: A.B. stressed that the Algerian identity could not be boiled down to a few adjectives and included much more than just Islam, Arabic and Berberness, also having a Mediterranean and African component. Moreover, he became a vocal supporter of Benflis in 2003 after the latter fell out with Bouteflika, even though Benflis' agenda was more reform-oriented than A.B.'s appeared to be. One possible explanation for this was regionalist sentiment; A.B. had pointed out during the interview that Benflis was 'a good man' because he too came from Batna and belonged to the tribe of Chaouia-Berbers.⁵⁵ Another reason could have been Benflis' strong support of young candidates: A.B., one of the youngest FLN MPs in the 1997 parliament, was one of the few FLN MPs from that parliament to get an excellent list place in the 2002 elections.

3.2 *The neo-revolutionary*

3.2.1 *Ideal-type*

At the opposite end to the neo-dinosaur on the elite type spectrum was the 'neo-revolutionary'. His principal goal was the immediate and radical change of the political system towards a democratic and participatory one, and the ousting of what he viewed as a completely corrupt and murderous elite. The neo-revolutionary defined himself as secular and came either from Kabylia or from an underprivileged neighbourhood in the capital or its urban outskirts, in which case, too, he could have Kabyle roots. The

languages he felt most comfortable with were Kabyle-Berber or Algerian dialect; his command of Standard Arabic had been enough to get him through school but he usually had a profound dislike of it. Members of his family could be found in the FFS or the RCD, but in rare cases also in the FLN. The neo-revolutionary grew up with the notion that his parents – the father had been a revolutionary, albeit not a prominent one or one who was refused the ominous *carte* giving him the official status of *ancien moudjahid* – were disappointed with the system but at the same time accommodated to it. This woke his resistance not only to the political system but also to all established political forces. The Mouvement Culturel Berbère (MCB) or a Kabyle soccer team had been early and important agents of his socialization at high school, and he was also involved in the Berber uprising in 1980 and in ensuing clandestine subversive anti-regime actions. If his background was not Kabyle, he got involved in politics in one of the large Algerian universities where sit-ins and demonstrations became common in the second half of the 1980s, in a reaction to the economy nose-diving, jobs becoming scarce and social benefits being cut.

The neo-revolutionary's role models were, on the one hand, activists for the Berber cause and fierce critics of the existing political system, such as the assassinated singer Matoub Lounès or the folksinger and head of the Kabyle autonomy movement Ferhat M'Henni. On the other hand, the neo-revolutionary saw himself in the tradition of Che Guevara, or Algerian revolutionaries such as Abane Ramdane, who had been marginalized or killed by those revolutionaries who later took over the state. In the eyes of the neo-revolutionary, the democratic and culturally pluralist 'true' values of the revolution had been betrayed by the state-builders, and the neo-revolutionary understood himself as the successor of the 'true' revolutionary. In line with some of his role models' tolerant vision of Algerian society, the Algerian identity for the neo-revolutionary was not reducible to one religion and language but seen as a *mélange* and a product of the many periods of the country's history. For him the Berber, the African and the Mediterranean components of *algérianité* were rooted just as deeply, if not more so, in Algerian culture as the Arabo-Muslim components.

Algeria's most urgent problems in the eyes of the neo-revolutionary were: the hijacking of the country by a corrupt and murderous elite, the complete mismanagement of the country's resources, and the superimposing of an Arabo-Muslim identity. Though he stated the need for reforms towards an education system based on universalist values and towards a more productive and efficient economy, the neo-revolutionary was convinced that the current system could not produce reforms and that all reforms proposed were designed either to placate the population and help the regime survive or to allow the elite to further enrich itself – democratization was deemed a *façade* at best. As a result of such perceptions, the neo-revolutionary was not interested in gradual reforms. He rejected negotiations and was ready to consider using violence to achieve

his goals, arguing that campaigns raising awareness among the masses and (violent) uprisings, rather than negotiations, had yielded results in the Algerian past. In this sense, the 'Kabyle neo-revolutionary' of the early 2000s was the unlikely successor of the 'Islamist neo-revolutionary' from a decade earlier, found primarily among FIS cadres such as Ali Belhadj. While these two types of neo-revolutionaries differed radically in their visions of a social order and the country's identity, they shared one goal: the removal of the existing regime – by force if necessary. They also had a similar function: they were models or even icons for the vast pool of young unemployed men.

In the early 2000s, third-generation 'Islamist neo-revolutionaries' were not part of the PRE,⁵⁶ and the neo-revolutionary was found mainly among leaders of the Kabyle protest movement and, in rarer cases, among cadres of independent unions, disenchanted (ex-)cadres of the RCD and the FFS or in NGOs, and he was much more likely to be Kabyle than not. The neo-revolutionary had entered neither political state institutions nor the top echelons of the civil administration. Usually he was a university lecturer, a union cadre, a teacher, a journalist or had no occupation apart from a leading role in the Kabyle movement, i.e. he was formally unemployed. The neo-revolutionary was found in the third circle of the elite and, in cases of special political conjunctures, temporarily in the second circle, but he had no chances of belonging to the second circle on a more permanent basis, mainly because he refused co-optation.

3.2.2 *Prototype*

C.D.,⁵⁷ who came from the 'Kabyle capital' Tizi Ouzou, was a teacher of economics and one of the most prominent leaders of the Kabyle protest movement. He was among those held in custody for several months in late 2002 and early 2003, and he was in the team that attempted to negotiate the implementation of the Platform of El Kseur with prime minister Ahmed Ouyahia in 2004. The family he was born into in 1969 was of modest background; his father, a worker in a factory, had been neither a revolutionary nor an FLN member, but C.D.'s maternal grandfather had been a *chahid*. One of C.D.'s maternal uncles had fallen victim to armed Islamists in the early 1990s. Confrontations with Islamists had also shaped C.D., though his politicization had been a result of the Berberist struggle – in his early schooldays he clandestinely posted the forbidden Tifinagh alphabet in the school's rest-rooms during the Berber Spring in 1980.⁵⁸

I was marked from my early childhood days onward by the practice of exclusion by a Jacobinian state. We lived right next to the university in Tizi and I experienced the Berber Spring from close up: I saw the violence and the wounded. This experience made me approach the activists in the MCB and in the unions. In 1985 I participated in local

riots and in 1988 I was studying in Algiers and took part in the October riots. Soon after, I left Algiers because I could not take the Islamists. I tried to address social issues together with them and start initiatives to fight the miserable socio-economic conditions, but they refused to co-operate with us. Nevertheless, I was against the coup d'état: no regime that establishes itself with a military coup is legitimate and has a future.

C.D. refused to identify with either side in the civil war, and did not pursue high-profile political activities for several years. Only after the killing of Kabyle singer Matoub Lounès in 1998 did he become deeply involved in such activities. He tried to initiate what would later become known as the Coordination des Aârouch, des Dairas et des Communes (CADC), but failed to succeed because of obstruction by the FFS and RCD parties, which feared a loss of power in the region. In 2001, during the clashes between the *gendarmerie* and young rioters, C.D. was not only among the latter but also helped to create new neighbourhood committees and hooked them up with already existing non-governmental communal structures, such as village committees. C.D.'s main political goal was the implementation of the Platform of El Kseur.⁵⁹ In addition, he cited the absence of the rule of law and the population's lack of faith in state institutions as problems that Algeria needed to face urgently. He made it clear, however, that he did not intend to go for a piecemeal solution.

We are not ready to compromise, and I am sure that the way to reach our goals is through uprisings and through the boycott of elections. The political parties have failed to change things because they were always ready to compromise and because they are a part of the system. What we want is a complete rupture with this system, a rupture with existing mentalities. And it is not just the generals who have these mentalities, every single functionary has them as well. We want to change mentalities and introduce a sense of citizenship, so that injustice is no longer accepted. We want to implement what was promised during the revolution, and what was decided on in Soummam but never became reality.

One of the legacies of Soummam mentioned by C.D. was a pluralistic view of the Algerian identity. For him this meant primarily but not exclusively *amazighité* and the Mediterranean character of the country. C.D. was the only interviewee to explicitly mention other religions as a necessary component of *algérianité*.

Our personality is composed of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Thanks to the writings of Kateb Yacine⁶⁰ I made the step from racism to tolerance. Yacine also taught me that there are no Arabs in Algeria but only arabisants.

While C.D. at first glance did not appear to differ from the ideal-type of the neo-revolutionary outlined above, his choices in the two years following the interview revealed a pragmatic side in addition to the radical one. Though he had vowed not to negotiate with the ‘pouvoir’ because adjustments to the status quo would only ‘benefit the powerful’ and ‘perpetuate the existing system’, he did eventually participate in negotiations with prime minister Ouyahia who aimed at a deal of partial implementation of the Platform of El Kseur in return for the protest movement’s support for Bouteflika in the 2004 presidential elections. C.D.’s pragmatism could be explained by his movement’s fear of falling into oblivion. Having reached highly publicized pre-agreements,⁶¹ the movement saw itself in a position strong enough to break off negotiations and return (temporarily) to a more confrontational ‘all or nothing’ strategy.

3.3 *The radical democrat*

3.3.1 *Ideal-type*

The radical democrat, though sharing many of the neo-revolutionary’s concerns, was radical not in his means nor in his main goal – a (social) democracy as it was found in European countries such those of Scandinavia – but in his refusal to accept in the long run anything that would fall short of such a democracy, or that would curtail it. The family he came from tended to be non-religious, comparatively educated, better-off but not wealthy, and counted prominent revolutionaries among its ranks. The radical democrat was much more likely to be a *francisant* or a *berberisant* than an *arabisant*, and if he did not come from Kabylia he stemmed from one of the big cities in the Algerian north. In either case, his family had a good standing in its neighbourhood or community – be it because it was in the private sector and a (small) local employer, because it counted an FLN functionary or local administrative cadres among its members, or because it had religious capital, e.g. was descended from a *marabout* (a local religious leader to whom supranatural powers were ascribed). The radical democrat grew up with a negative view of the Boumedienne and later the Chadli regime because his parents had already been critical of them or because of a personal experience of injustice early on – either because children of regime elites automatically received better grades than him in school, or because there was a sense of ethnic or linguistic discrimination. As a result, he never felt compelled to join any of the FLN satellites, but was instead active in organizations such as the MCB or the radically oppositional youth movement Rassemblement Action Jeunesse (RAJ)⁶² and participated in sit-ins and demonstrations or handed out leaflets. In contrast to the neo-revolutionary, he did not take part in riots and most of his role models were icons of peaceful resistance, such as Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr, though he also showed admiration for ex-leaders of guerrilla troops with

democratic goals, such as Nelson Mandela. A European leader he much admired was the assassinated Swedish prime minister Olof Palme because of his compassion for the less privileged and his interest in less developed countries.

Similar to the neo-revolutionary, the radical democrat was of the opinion that the revolutionaries – with the notable exception of figures such as the FFS leader Aït-Ahmed – had betrayed what he considered to have been the main goal of the revolution: the establishment of an independent and culturally pluralistic Algeria with representative political institutions. The radical democrat was convinced that Algeria's future could only be one of hope, if the mistakes of the past and the taboos surrounding them were addressed by state leaders. In the radical democrat's eyes, one such issue mishandled for decades was Algerian identity, which for him had to be based on the realities on the ground rather than on an ideology. The Berber and French languages deserved a treatment not inferior to that of Standard Arabic.

For the radical democrat Algeria's biggest problems were: the lack of security and peace; the involvement of the army in politics; the absence of a separation of powers, and particularly of an independent and functioning judiciary; the continuous abuse of human rights; the mismanagement and unfair distribution of state resources; and the non-acknowledgement of the country's cultural diversity. Also, the radical democrat was a fervent defender of profound changes in the education system towards a system promulgating universalist and civic values and compatible with European systems. But at the same time he feared the official recognition of private schools would lead to a two-class system. For similar reasons he was hostile to privatization, which in his eyes meant the loss of workplaces and a further enrichment of a small circle of political and military elites. He could not discern any steps towards democratization and described the status quo as one of an authoritarian military regime with a civil façade. His concept for a way out of what he termed 'the crisis' was the concept of a transitional government including the entire spectrum of political actors, i.e. the FIS as well. Such a government should then initiate a process of reconciliation and democratic transition.

During the first term of Bouteflika, the radical democrat was found in very small numbers in parliament and in even smaller numbers in the higher echelons of the civil and political administration. Mainly, however, he sat in independent unions, NGOs and newspapers, and, in some cases participated in the Kabyle citizens' movements. If he had a political affiliation it was usually with the FFS or the PT; in rare cases he could be found in the RCD or in other parties that defined themselves as democratic. The spectrum of the radical democrat's educational and professional background spanned virtually all professions: it ranged from medical doctor and health or social worker to university lecturer, teacher and journalist.

In strong contrast to the neo-dinosaur, the radical democrat was a true politician in the Weberian sense,⁶³ whereas the neo-revolutionary oscillated between a politician and a rebel or revolutionary who did not exclude violence

as a means to achieve his goals.⁶⁴ The radical democrat's chances for upward mobility were slim. Yet, because he was not a priori rejecting dialogue or inclusion in the formal political game, it was not impossible for the radical democrat to move into the second circle of the PRE.

3.3.2 *Prototype*

E.F.⁶⁵ belonged to the top leadership of the independent union SNAPAP in 2002, the largest so-called 'autonomous union'. He was neither close to nor a member of any political party, even though his father had been a high FLN cadre. E.F.'s family background was close to the regime and materially privileged. His father, who stemmed from the Algerian south-east, had been a revolutionary and later became director of a large hospital. E.F., who was born in the year of independence, initially followed in his father's professional and ideological footsteps: he studied health administration, became an UGTA activist and occupied a management position in a hospital.

I had joined the UGTA because I had an interest in changing the socio-professional situation of workers in the health sector and the deplorable state of affairs in hospitals – two things that are obviously linked. Over the years I had to admit to myself that the UGTA had no interest in changing anything. On the contrary, their goal was to keep things the way they were. What also troubled me increasingly was the fact that elections in the UGTA were rigged even after the political opening. They continued recycling the same functionaries . . . I simply lost faith in a change of the system from inside the system, and the UGTA *is* part of the system and its problems.

Despite all the harassment – the health ministry suspended his salary for four months in 1998 and his wife, a medical doctor, was repeatedly intimidated by the *services* – he did not regret the change and felt that the SNAPAP, together with other independent unions, had made considerable achievements. Among these achievements he cited pay rises of 30 per cent in the public sectors in 1994, the fact that privatization in the health and other sectors had hardly advanced, and the fact that the SNAPAP had managed to get a foot in the door of several ministries, despite the UGTA's unofficial monopoly as the government's interlocutor.

In August 2001 the entire executive went on a hunger strike. The result was that the minister of labour received us on the fifteenth day of the strike. Most of our hunger strikes have forced the government to at least speak with us. I really believe in this kind of strike. Sitting around and complaining is not a solution. We have to mobilize the people for our causes but we can only do this if we can show achievements, even if they

are small. Our generation does not believe in populist rhetoric any more but wants to see concrete results.

E.F.'s immediate political activities were primarily geared at mobilizing workers for better working conditions and for stopping privatization efforts, not primarily because he was against a market economy – 'if it had a social net like in Scandinavian countries' he could accept it – but because he had no confidence in the governing elite's management of such processes. E.F.'s hope was that if the population realized that it was possible to make progress through persistence and negotiations, more Algerians would develop the confidence to struggle for large-scale political change. As an important prerequisite for such change, he cited the complete remaking of the education system, for he lamented a conscious 'infantilization' of the population through a system that encouraged repetition but not analytical and independent thinking. Moreover, despite being more *arabisant* than *françaisant*, he advocated giving French and English a higher priority in order to make it easier for young Algerians to interact with the outside world. Though he defined himself as an Arab and a Muslim primarily, he accused the Boumediennists and the Arabo-Baathists of having erased Algeria's cultural diversity and thus having laid a basis for the identity crisis the country was facing. E.F. claimed that he could not care less whether SNAPAP members were radically secular Francophones or die-hard Islamists who had been close to the FIS, as long as they tolerated each other and respected each other's right to be different.

While the list of reforms E.F. deemed important was long, he had a clear sense of which was the most urgent of all:

Our first priority should be an autonomous justice. It is impossible to change the situation if you have a justice that takes orders; we need a state under the rule of law. What we also need is the retreat of the army from politics and the election of a president by the people. But we need to understand that we cannot just wait for democracy to happen and to expect it to come from above, we need to democratize society as well, to make people understand how it can work. One way to do this is to show the population that elections, even if they are just taking place in a union, can be fair and free. If we do not manage to convince people that there is hope, that their problems can be solved and that we can make progress towards democracy and the rule of law through peaceful means, we will have a civil war again. Many Algerians believe that a solution for our problems will come through violence only. But I don't think so: we will only reproduce our problems instead of solving them. I believe in Ghandi's way.

Though E.F. came close to the ideal-type of the radical democrat, he differed in that, similar to the above-presented prototype of the neo-revolutionary, he was ready to deviate from his hard line and make concessions. In the case

of E.F. this meant that he did not have a ‘zero-sum way of thinking’, i.e. either to get all his demands through or to retreat from negotiations, but was prepared to concentrate on inching ahead in small steps and to struggle for small concessions in his limited field. One permanent challenge he faced with this step-by-step strategy was to resist co-optation; another possibly even bigger challenge was not to abandon his political work in order to live a life free of pressures and threats. Three friends of his – a top cadre in an autonomous union, an FFS member of parliament and a member of the FFS executive – had decided to leave politics after years of frustrating setbacks, including lack of democratic procedures within their party or organization; two of them left to start a new life in France, a third one to take up a management job in the Algerian office of a US pharmaceutical giant.

3.4 *The Islamist reformer*

3.4.1 *Ideal-type*

The Islamist reformer shared the key political assumption with the radical democrat that profound political reforms towards representative political institutions were a prerequisite for a lasting solution to the country’s multiple social and economic problems. However, he differed strongly from the radical democrat on the nature of the country’s identity, the role of Islam in the state and, particularly, on the extent to which laws should be based on religion. The Islamist reformer – who could come from either an urban or a more (albeit not completely) rural background – counted several revolutionaries and often also high FLN cadres to his extended family. His family tended to be in the private sector, ran a small or medium-sized business and was (moderately) privileged. He had conservative values but was not completely strict on religious matters: the Islamist reformer was likely to have a father or a brother who would not decline a glass of wine. His own professional background was in medicine, law (often but not necessarily Islamic law), engineering or business. If he was not a perfect bilingual, he made efforts to improve his fluency in French or Arabic and tended to learn an additional language, such as English, Italian or Spanish.

Even if the Islamist reformer had short stints in FLN satellites, such as the UNJA or the Scouts Musulmans, he did not feel comfortable in that environment. The most important agent of his religious and political socialization soon became the mosque, to which he started going in the late 1970s or early 1980s because it was a space into which the *parti unique*’s arm did not reach and in which he could share and discuss his disenchantment with what he increasingly perceived as the mismanagement of the country by its elites. His political engagement, often influenced by the teachings of Malek Bennabi,⁶⁶ was born out of a strong nationalist feeling and a sense that the post-revolutionary elite had betrayed the Arab-Islamic pillars of the revolution and subscribed to authoritarian, ‘pseudo-socialist’ and Francophone

values instead. The Islamist reformer's vision of the Algerian state was one in which the social order would be shaped more by specifically Islamic than by universalist values. He wanted to see the Koran and the *sunna* (the sayings and practices ascribed to the prophet which are seen to prescribe the way of life for Muslims) as the main line of orientation in law-making but was ready to concede that rules derived in a historic context dating back more than a millennium needed to be adapted to the current situation. For a short period in the late 1980s or early 1990s the Islamist reformist had pinned his hopes on the FIS, but turned away from that party because he saw little room for his upward mobility, or because he felt the dynamics in the party had become too intolerant and radical for his taste.

The range of the Islamist reformer's role models spanned from non-Muslim figures such as Ghandi and Nelson Mandela to famous Muslim thinkers: for instance, the founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, Hassan el-Banna; the latter's grandson, Islamist reform thinker and icon of many European Muslims, Tariq Ramadan; the nineteenth-century reformer and political activist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani; or the twentieth-century Algerian reformer Malek Bennabi. Finally, MSP leader Mahfoudh Nahnah was cited as a good example of someone who tried to change the system from within.

The Islamist reformer considered Algeria to face three main clusters of problems. The first was the absence of the rule of law and the lack of a separation of powers and representative political institutions, as well as the ongoing human rights abuses. While the Islamist reformer was not necessarily a convinced democrat, in contrast to the radical Islamists of the FIS he did understand democracy as not simply a means to accede to power and to implement his social order; he also believed in democratization because he viewed political violence, the lack of security and the absence of sustainable development as, among other things, a result of political exclusion. He thus advocated the inclusion of all political forces – from radical secular parties to the FIS – into the political process, even though he was highly ambivalent regarding the latter's re-legalization.⁶⁷

The second cluster of problems the Islamist reformer diagnosed included the mismanagement of the country's economic resources and the rampant corruption by parts of the elite. He favoured market reforms, on the condition that these were implemented in a completely transparent and accountable way. Finally, the Islamist reformer was preoccupied with changing values in society towards 'more conformity with the values of Islam' that for him included solidarity, honesty, responsibility, equity and tolerance. The reforms he was most reticent about were – apart from those regarding the *code de la famille* – those concerning the education sector. He feared that reforms in that field would fortify French and an identity that was alien to the country and that would create a French or European society – a fear he shared with the conservative neo-dinosaur. Another similarity between the two was that the Islamist reformer was also adamant about the Algerian identity being primarily Arab and Muslim, though he, too, conceded a Berber component.

Despite his multi-layered critique of the status quo, the Islamist reformer was optimistic that change in the direction he hoped for would be inevitable; it was merely a question of persistence and patience for change to materialize progressively within the next three legislative periods. The Islamist reformer had better cards for moving into the second circle of the elite than the radical democrat or the neo-revolutionary, because he agreed to making (limited) deals with the regime and/or because he at times commanded substantial veto, nuisance and bargaining power. Usually he belonged to the second circle only temporarily, for instance in pre-election periods when he had bargaining power because core elites depended on his support or when education sector reforms were high on the agenda and he could make his veto power felt. In 2002, he was found in the cabinet, parliament, top administrative positions – for instance, director-general of customs – or at the top of a successful private enterprise, a big Islamic NGO or an Arabic newspaper. He was likely to be a cadre in the MSP, in Wafa or, in rarer cases, in the MRN. Similar to the radical democrat, he was not a functionary but a politician in the Weberian sense.

3.4.2 *Prototype*

G.H.⁶⁸ was a medical doctor who sat in the executive of the MSP, was heading the party's parliamentary faction in 2002 and was generally considered to be one of the outstanding brains in his party. G.H. was born shortly before independence in the eastern province of M'sila, a traditionally religious *wilaya*, into an *arabisant* family in which both parents had a revolutionary record. His father, a hairdresser, had in his youth been close to the revolutionary leader and later president, Mohamed Boudiaf, who also came from M'sila. G.H. described his background as belonging to the local bourgeoisie. Several of his brothers had made careers in the civil administration; one of them was chief of a district office. His wife was a university lecturer in biology. G.H.'s first contact with the slowly but strongly emerging Islamist movement came through a local Islamist figure in the 1970s, but also through conflicts between him and his friends and members of the UNJA over ethical, moral, cultural and social questions. For G.H., Arab nationalism had failed at state-building and he wanted an Islamic alternative, for which he had to fight clandestinely until 1989. In 1990, he became a founding member of Hamas, as MSP was called until 1997. He also belonged to several associations linked to MSP, headed a research centre close to the party and was the publisher of two journals, one on economics and the other on human sciences. In G.H.'s view Algeria's main problems could be boiled down to one issue:

The fundamental problem is the lack of democracy. Putting an end to violence is linked to democracy, economic problems are a result of the lack of democracy. Thanks to manipulated elections the parliament is filled with clients of the top elites and cannot function properly. We cannot

control the executive. Another problem is that we have no control over the management of the economy by a mafia. The level of large-scale corruption is catastrophic, and there is zero transparency and we have no mechanisms of control or sanctions because there exists no independent judiciary. In 1991 there would have been a possibility to change the system radically but the FIS played into the hands of the government through its extremism. Nevertheless, and contrary to most of the members of my party, I was against the interruption of the elections in 1992.

Because of Western European experiences after World War II, G.H. believed that only democracy could in the long run marginalize fanatics. Moreover, he saw no contradiction between Islam and democracy. Islam for him should mainly offer the general guidelines on which Algerian society should be built; the laws, he argued, would still need to be elaborated in a democratic framework and process. The challenge was to create a democratic model that would fit the Algerian social structures. None of the Muslim countries, in his view, had achieved this goal, although he found the intellectual and social experiment in Iran interesting. Another experiment cited by him ‘with some reservations’ was Turkey, the most democratic but at the same time an officially secular Muslim country. G.H. stressed that he was not against different competing political agendas and ‘civilizational models’, and he had a positive opinion of his experiences in the first ever multi-party parliament in Algeria, from the point of view of being able to exchange ideas with people who had fundamentally different notions of what Algeria should look like. The notion of tolerance was also reflected in G.H.’s list of role models. In addition to famous Muslim thinkers such as early historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldun and medieval Islamic philosopher and scholar of Koranic and natural sciences Ibn Rushd (also known as Averroes), it included Western philosophers with universalist positions.

I generally much respect everyone who calls for sitting together and concluding a social contract and who has the courage to speak about his fears. I admire Jean-Jacques Rousseau for his *volonté générale*, John Locke for his notion of tolerance, and the Dutch law theorist Hugo Grotius for writing that all men and all nations are subject to an international law and for his anti-force and his legalist positions.

Even though G.H. defended the right of Algerians to be secular, he was not ready to make substantial concessions on the contested reforms in the education sector because he feared that they would twist the Algerian identity into an occidental one.

We are against scrapping everything that exists. One has suggested things that have nothing to do with our cultural belonging – for instance, to replace Standard Arabic with Algerian dialect, or to impose French. I am

not saying that the Algerian personality is not shaped by the French colonial experience. In fact it is shaped by a set of values that includes: Arabic, Islam, *amazighté* – which in my view entered into a marriage with Islam – as well as the French influence and the extreme violence of the war of independence. Don't misunderstand me, I think we need to learn foreign languages, but we want English to enter the school system. Apart from all that, I have a problem if a commission is installed to elaborate education reforms and the parliament is circumvented. I also think the population should have a say in the process of designing these reforms.

G.H.'s demand for the introduction of English into the school system was not just rhetoric: he sent his children to private English lessons and regretted not mastering it himself. His interest in English was also linked to his interest in international developments and in access to the international press beyond the French and Arabic media. Of all elite prototypes he was the only one to mention the Arab–Israeli conflict and the developments in Iraq at the time without being asked first. While strongly condemning Israeli and US policies in the Middle East, he made a point of saying that he did not believe in conspiracy theories accusing (American) Jews of being the sole motor of these policies but cited the American 'Christian Right'. He underlined, moreover, that he did not want his anti-Zionist positions to be misunderstood as anti-Semitic. One of the reasons for G.H.'s strong interest in international developments was that he viewed Algeria's perspectives for democratization as depending not only on domestic developments but also on external factors.

We have taken the direction towards democracy, but we have not reached the goal. Three central things democracy requires are: political competition, freedom of expression and *alternance* [regular and democratic change of regime]. We have, at least to a certain extent, achieved the first two requirements. What we have not had so far is *alternance*. I believe there are two ways of reaching it. One way is to bank on pressure from the street, but this could end in disastrous violence. The way I believe in is to change the system slowly, step by step. This can go wrong too, because it depends on solid party strategies, on a strong civil society, on unions, on the balance of power between elite groups, on policies of the international community – especially the US – *vis-à-vis* Algeria and on oil prices.

G.H. – who fell squarely into the category of Islamist reformer, even if he shared some positions and characteristics with the radical democrat and the nationalist reformer – underlined that the only justification for staying in government was the ability to slowly change the system from within. He argued that there was a period of grace in which his party could afford to make compromises, but that eventually the voters would want to see that this strategy yielded results. In the absence of tangible results for his electorate by 2002, G.H. was among those MSP cadres who pleaded for more distance from the

regime. In the end, however, his pragmatism won. He thus went along with the MSP decision to back Bouteflika in the 2004 elections, even though the latter's policies – for instance, *vis-à-vis* the private press – fundamentally contradicted G.H.'s voiced convictions. This could be explained mainly by a strategy for political survival – the MSP had lost both its charismatic leader and a substantial part of its electorate (cf. Table IV.2) – and by efforts to maintain the privileged position of the party and its elites within the system.

3.5 The nationalist reformer

3.5.1 Ideal-type

The nationalist reformer was again a reform-oriented elite type and shared certain prime concerns of the radical democrat and the Islamist reformer, for instance the need for a state bound by the rule of law. But in contrast to the radical democrat, he was an adherent of gradual reforms, and the scope of the reforms he envisioned tended to be limited to the civil administration, the economy and the judiciary. The nationalist reformer's family and educational background and his political socialization were quite similar to those of the neo-dinosaur, though the nationalist reformer's family tended to be less party- and more business-oriented and more Francophone. His father could be a cadre in Sonatrach, a P-DG (*Président-Directeur Général*) of a state-owned enterprise or a private businessman whose small or medium enterprise had thrived thanks to good ties to the *nomenklatura* of the single-party system. These ties could stem from revolutionary times and were upheld even if the nationalist reformer's family was not one of FLN functionaries or did not belong to the party. The nationalist reformer had a higher degree in economics, political science, law or medicine, and usually had one foot in politics and one foot in business, at the same time being a cadre in a (large) NGO or organization linked to the *famille révolutionnaire*. The family he came from could range from conservative and traditionally religious to secular and strongly occidentalized in outlooks and *habitus*. The nationalist reformer himself tended to be rather conservative; for instance, he called for slight modifications only of the extremely conservative and female-discriminating family law but not for its abrogation, and he was keen on conforming with the social rules of the changing environments in which he found himself, drinking with some people while never touching a glass in the presence of others.⁶⁹

This elite ideal-type had neither been raised in a strongly politicized environment nor had he pursued political activities in his early years. Though for a short time in his teens or twenties he belonged to the Scouts, the UNJA, the UGTA or, if female, to the UNFA, the nationalist reformer did not look back on a career within these organizations. He was influenced more strongly by (short) stays abroad during his university years or holidays with his family in Belgium, France, Spain, Switzerland or, in rare cases, the United Kingdom, the United States or Southeast Asian countries. The fact

that these countries appeared well managed and were prospering left a lasting impression on the nationalist reformer. He showed great respect for strong leaders such as Charles de Gaulle and even for authoritarian leaders such as South Korea's General Park Chung Hee, who had successfully pushed economic reforms and led his country to prosperity. At the same time, the nationalist reformer also admired Mahatma Ghandi for his successful non-violent and patient way of struggling for his goals. His main role models, however, were the *génération de Novembre 54* – those who had kicked off the armed anti-colonial struggle – and specifically Mohamed Boudiaf, who had tried to bring calm back to the country after the coup d'état in 1992 and to change the rules of governance in Algeria, for which he was seen to have paid with his life.

Similar to the neo-dinosaur, the nationalist reformer saw himself as a natural inheritor of the revolutionary legacy and spoke of continuity rather than conflict between the different generations. Yet he was vocal about resenting the fact that the second and third generations had been kept from decision-making positions for so long. Though he was reticent to openly and strongly criticize the revolutionary elites for the way they had ruled the country after independence, the nationalist reformer understood the rise of Islamism in the 1980s and the violence of the 1990s primarily as a response to the political and socio-economic mismanagement in earlier decades and to deficits in the education system. Moreover, he was convinced that what he considered to be the country's biggest problems – socio-economic disparities, absence of security, lack of confidence in state institutions, and the lack of rule of law – could only be addressed through more transparent and accountable modes of governance and through structural reforms in the economic sector, the civil administration, the judiciary and the education system. Overall, his analysis of Algeria's problems barely differed from that of the World Bank.⁷⁰

The nationalist reformer could be said to have internalized the modernization paradigm in the Lipsetian (1959) sense, in that he argued that economic and social development – reflected in income, living standards and education – were prerequisites for democracy. This is why he supported market reforms and privatization – albeit not of Sonatrach, which, in his strongly nationalist rhetoric, he considered to 'belong to all Algerians' – and why he stressed the importance of private sector-led growth. He also supported education sector reforms, even if he cautioned not throwing out the baby with the bathwater, and saw no need for a system that produced a 'completely occidental identity' – Algeria for him was an Arab, Muslim and Berber country, with Mediterranean and African components and with strong remnants of the colonial past.

The hope of the nationalist reformer was that the implementation of the reforms he vocally supported would ease tensions, satisfy interest groups, and prevent a rupture with the existing system, which the nationalist reformer – in contrast to the neo-revolutionary and the radical democrat – strongly opposed.

His reform proposals could thus also be understood as an effort to postpone or avoid substantial political concessions. Being the elite type – together with the neo-dinosaur – best placed within the system, he had the most to lose from a change of system. But he had something to gain from reforms: legitimacy. He thus was concerned with the lack of popular confidence in state institutions and their widely perceived lack of legitimacy. The contradictory goal of achieving legitimacy without endangering the existing political system resulted in an ambivalent position on national reconciliation and on the issue of lifting the ban on the FIS. On a more general level, the dilemma of the nationalist reformer was that the substantial structural reforms which he vocally supported towards efficiency, accountability, transparency and the rule of law, if implemented fully would threaten to lead to a system change – that is, undo the structures that produced his elite status.

In 2003 the nationalist reformer was found in all segments of the Algerian PRE: in the army, government, parliament, public administration, public and private economic sectors, NGOs and in former mass organizations. He tended to belong or be close to the FLN, the RND, the RCD or the so-called democratic parties. Of all third-generation elite ideal-types, he had by far the best chances of upward mobility because he perfectly represented the new reform-oriented Algeria which the core and second circle elites were keen on selling to the outside world.

3.5.2 Prototype

J.K.⁷¹ had a formal position within the Algerian system in 2002 influential enough to place him in the second circle of the elite, and had co-ordinated and participated in negotiations with several European countries and the EU. He had been born in Kabylia shortly after independence into a very well-off family of private entrepreneurs – the richest family in town – with a strong revolutionary record but no strong allegiance to the FLN. Several of J.K.'s relatives occupied high positions in various ministries, and his wife had a close relative who was a general, albeit not one belonging to the core elite. After studying law in Algiers and international law in a European capital, this perfectly bilingual young elite was immediately recruited into an important research and consulting position within the civil administration, and from there moved into positions of strong advisory power. J.K.'s political conscientization had started, he considered, late in life.

Prior to my stay abroad I had hardly realized that different positions on one and the same issue existed. I really grew up in a *parti unique* spirit, even though most of my family did not belong to the FLN. It's embarrassing to admit how apolitical I was, but when I studied at Ben Aknoun [one of the campuses of the University of Algiers], I was not even aware that an organization such as the PAGS⁷² existed, and that some of my colleagues who had suddenly disappeared were in prison. When I later

found out, I felt very much like a coward. The uprisings in 1988 also took me by complete surprise and were a huge shock for me. I had not realized that there was so much dissatisfaction. October 1988 helped me break out of the *parti unique* thinking. But what really was an eye-opener was my stay abroad.

After returning to Algiers, J.K. decided not to go into business, as his siblings had done, but to pursue a career in public service in order to change what bothered him most in his country: the deep popular distrust of the state, its elites and institutions. While J.K. did not belong to a party, he felt closest to the FLN of all parties and uttered great admiration for the party's leader and prime minister at the time, Ali Benflis, who had been his mentor on several occasions and with whom he shared a legalistic approach to politics and the goal of establishing efficient and exemplary state institutions in order to regain popular confidence in the state.

What Algeria needs most urgently are institutions in which people fully, or at least partly, recognize themselves. My stay abroad showed me that a state is only efficient when it's popular. My motivation for entering public service was an idealistic one and had much to do with my belief in the state. One of our biggest problems is the absence of normality. The relations between the individual and the state in Algeria have never been normal: first we had the Ottomans and then the French. If we want to build the population's confidence in the state, we have to start with ourselves and behave impeccably. The symbolic level is extremely important. The policemen, the tax collector, everyone has to behave according to the rules. In my opinion, confidence in the state starts with the bus that comes on time. I fondly remember how meticulously the in-house regulations were observed in my university dormitory abroad.

J.K.'s strategy for change was thus one of accumulation of positive experiences, of rebuilding trust between the governing elites and the population. His stated long-term goals were democracy and a 'social market economy', but he had little illusions that these would be reached overnight, and certainly not in an abrupt process – the word 'rupture' was what he in his own words 'detested' most. He was convinced that Algeria was in a transition process whose outcome would be democracy. As proof, he cited, among other things, the 2002 parliamentary elections, which were commonly seen to have been much less rigged than those of 1997.

We are on the way to democratization. Just look at the many pressure groups we have. During the negotiations with the EU, I realized how many such groups there were, particularly in the economic sector. Business associations, individual entrepreneurs, the UGTA, they all tried to influence the course of negotiations and we had to take them into consideration. What

we need is patience. This is why, for instance, I am against the abrogation of the family code. It should be modified, but calling for abrogation only antagonizes certain groups and would achieve nothing in the end.

J.K. generally pleaded for a pragmatic approach to reforms, particularly when it came to issues that touched upon the national identity, such as education sector reform. Here he resented what he called the erroneous notion that it was necessary to decide between an Arab-Oriental and an Occidental-Mediterranean identity and between tradition and modernity. Algerians in J.K.'s eyes had in their daily lives long reconciled the various identities, and he cited friends of his who saw no contradiction between praying five times a day and drinking alcohol. In his view, the big error of the country's earlier leaders had been to impose an Arab-Muslim identity. Pressed on his position on national reconciliation including the FIS, as stated in the Platform of Rome, J.K. was reluctant to give a clear answer and merely said that all forces adhering to democratic rules should be included in the reconciliation process; he avoided specifying whether the FIS would qualify or not. While J.K.'s discourse was strongly one of democratization, he did not address any of the obstacles to such a process cited by elite types such as the neo-revolutionary, the radical democrat and Islamist reformer. He thus exemplified the dilemma shared by many nationalist reformers: if he stood up for his convictions, he would risk jeopardizing his privileged position and, from his perspective, his potential role as an 'agent of change' within the system. However, J.K. differed from the ideal-type in that he eventually did risk his position for his convictions: he sided with Benflis in the conflict with Bouteflika and as a result had to change his job to a less attractive one.

4 Conclusion

The above analysis of third-generation members of the Algerian PRE could lead to an optimistic long-term outlook. Though the young elites tended to be recruited from a very limited pool of already privileged social segments – mainly a result of the older elite generation's language policies and the instrumentalization and monopolization of historical legitimacy – a majority of the different elite types found among them appeared dissatisfied with the existing system and were strongly reform-oriented in their discourse. This was true not only of elites critical of the regime but also of the most influential third-generation elite type, the nationalist reformer. However, the question remaining open was whether the discourse of reform-oriented third-generation elites would translate into action once they moved into decision-making positions. In the examples discussed above, there were a number of indications that this would not necessarily be the case. The prototypes close to the regime in particular displayed inconsistencies between their words and their deeds. For example, while they pleaded for the rule of law and/or democratization, they still supported Bouteflika, who increasingly

demonstrated authoritarian tendencies, manipulated the judicial system and clamped down on the press. Moreover, nationalist reformers who belonged to the second generation and had moved into high positions such as that of prime minister (e.g. Benflis and Ouyahia) also displayed such discrepancies between words and deeds. For example, despite Ouyahia's neo-liberal economic discourse and voiced admiration for British ex-prime minister Margaret Thatcher's tough stance *vis-à-vis* the British trade unions, he made enormous concessions to the UGTA.

Relying primarily on verbally expressed attitudes and explicit agendas – as did earlier studies on Arab elites in general and Algerian elites in particular – thus proves problematic for explaining political choices and even more so for making predictions for future political choices. Zartman (1983: 22), for instance, described North African elites and aspirants graduating in the 1970s as 'a generation of technicians, interested in efficiency, effectiveness, good government in the sense of technically correct outputs'. Yet Algerian 'technicians' of the generation Zartman discussed (i.e. the second generation in this study's terminology), as they moved into higher positions, became implicated in corruption like their predecessors, contributed to the continuation of clientelist practices and shared responsibility for the ineffectiveness on all levels of the administration and for a completely inefficient state economy.

There are several possible explanations for the apparent discrepancies between attitudes and behaviour. A first such explanation is that voiced reform convictions are mainly window-dressing for a national and increasingly international audience. Or, to put it in more general terms, that an individual's voiced attitudes do not correspond to his true convictions. After all, keeping with World Bank terminology such as 'good governance' and 'building credible and representative institutions' was the best guarantee for receiving foreign aid in the 1990s and for being invited to international conferences. Yet it would be simplistic and occidental hubris to assume that Algerian elites, and particularly regime elites, systematically lied about their deepest convictions. There could, for instance, be little doubt that the nationalist reformer had indeed realized that solving the country's enormous social and economic problems required modifications to the existing system – even if this insight came out of an instinct to survive and if the underlying motto was *changer pour durer* (change in order to last). A second, more plausible explanation for strong inconsistencies between elite words and elite deeds is that elite attitudes are merely one important 'ingredient' in the process of making political decisions, and that they tend to be challenged, confronted, altered and overridden by a number of structural factors constraining the elites. The focus of Chapter VI hence is on these structural factors which define the '*Handlungskorridor*' (Merkel and Puhle 1999: 11), the corridor of action within which elites can operate.

VI Factors structuring elite corridors of action

The analysis of intra-elite developments, mechanisms of elite reproduction and emerging elite types has provided a number of insights into the relationship between elite dynamics and political system change in Algeria, or, more precisely, the absence of such change. Explanations for the absence of change have ranged from the extreme fragmentation of politically relevant elites and the core elite's successful management of this fragmented political scene to reform-oriented attitudes and agendas being overridden by other considerations. Understanding the nature of these considerations as well as the reasons for fragmentation of the PRE beyond the core elite divide-and-conquer strategy discussed earlier, however, requires going a step further and analysing elites in relationship to non-elites and to their larger social, cultural and economic context: in short, to study 'elites in society'.

There are, obviously, different ways to approach the relationship between elites and non-elites. One way would be to view elites and non-elites (or masses) in binary categories and oppose them to one another in the tradition of classical elite theorists such as Pareto (1963). Observers of modern Algeria have tended to stress the huge gaps between elites and the rest of the population – in terms of economic privileges, outlooks or behaviour. Entelis (1986: 156ff.), for instance, wrote that 'Algerians who must deal with power and have responsibilities invariably develop outlooks on politics different from those in the society who remain simple observers or marginal activists.' Roberts (2002b: 22), moreover, pointed out that *la hogra* – contempt of the ruling *vis-à-vis* the ruled, abuse of authority and arbitrary rule – constituted the premise for the (mis-)management of the state–society relationship by the Algerian authorities. While these arguments cannot be dismissed, and while large elite/non-elite gaps existed in Algeria regarding access to state resources and the possibility of participating in decision-making, it is problematic to (completely) divorce elites from the rest of society in the analysis and to neglect the fact that elites not only shape their society but also are a product of that society.

Hence, another way of looking at the elite/non-elite relationship would be one that focuses not on differences but on commonalities and on the specific nature of links between elites and the rest of society. Chabal and Daloz (1999: 31) argued, with regard to elites in sub-Saharan Africa,

that explaining the various ways in which elites in power are connected to those from whom they receive support – that is, in effect, making sense of the complexities of political representation – is fundamental to the comparative understanding of contemporary African politics.

This argument can easily be extended to Arab politics and, arguably, has universal validity. An excellent basis for analysing ‘the complexities of political representation’ in Algeria are election campaigns. Such campaigns – be it the parliamentary one of May 2002, the communal one of October 2002 or the presidential one of 2004 – allow for studying the various ways in which elites and non-elites are connected as well as the impact of structural factors on elite choices. They reveal what Migdal (2001: 22) called a ‘multidimensional space’ in which the interaction between elites and their (potential) supporters takes place and ‘in which the symbolic element is as important as the material’. Moreover, they point to what Camau and Geisser (2003: 319), with regard to Tunisian authoritarianism, described as culture shared by those governing and those that are being governed: that is, the dominant and the dominated. This chapter thus draws strongly but not exclusively on material from election campaigns, such as press articles, interviews conducted during campaigns and the anthropological instrument of participatory observation.

The main focus of this chapter is on both the symbolic and the material ties between elites on the one hand and the wider population on the other, in order to determine factors – other than the earlier discussed outlooks and political agendas – that shaped the corridors of action of Algeria’s politically relevant elites. The first part of this chapter analyses ways in which dominant socio-culturally rooted perceptions – of desirable leadership qualities, of how politics function and of how political change is seen to come about – affected elite corridors of action, and what this meant for elite choices. It seeks, moreover, to understand how ‘traditional’ forms of social organization were reflected in political structures and what this meant for political practices in general and elite behaviour in particular. The second part identifies (vested) interests, obligations and constraints that resulted from factors as diverse as family and tribal solidarity, regionalist sentiment, clientelist relations and/or rent-dependency as well as from increasing international embeddedness. Proceeding in this way will not only allow for better understanding of elite choices but also of factors – other than core elite strategies – that contained liberalization dynamics and facilitated maintaining the status quo.

1 Perceptions of politics and resulting practices

In September and October 2002, election campaigns for the forty-eight regional parliaments (*Assemblées Populaires de Wilayaat*, APW) and the 1,541 local assemblies (*Assemblées Populaires Communales*, APC) were under way in Algeria. Ali Benflis, secretary general of the FLN and then still

prime minister, toured a majority of Algerian provinces to publicly support local FLN candidates. When he travelled to the south-western and southern Algerian provinces Tiaret, Tissemsilt and Ghardaia, which are part of what Algerians refer to as *l'Algérie profonde*,¹ he was accompanied by the president of the parliament (APN), by an FLN minister, and by a handful of FLN MPs and senators as well as by prominent revolutionary figures.² During this trip Benflis appeared, on the one hand, in large public rallies attended mainly by FLN activists, and, on the other hand, in small gatherings with local notables from which everyone except for a few high-profile figures from Benflis' entourage were excluded.

In the large rallies, Ali Benflis, who sat on a panel between the FLN minister and the president of the APN, was the only one to speak – the others remained completely mute throughout all rallies. During the entire trip, moreover, not one candidate in the elections appeared on stage or was referred to by Benflis. The insignificance of the candidates (at least on this day) was symbolized by the fact that they were used for driving around the cars and persons (including journalists) belonging to the 'Benflis *cortège*' – the person driving the car this author travelled in was the mayor of a small town and a candidate for re-election. Benflis, when asked a few weeks later why he did not present any of the candidates or let the president of parliament speak, said that he would have not minded conducting the meetings in a less personalized and more participatory manner, but that the audience expected to hear and see a strong leader.³

The second type of meetings, the small exclusive ones, were geared at getting the collective vote from entire tribes. The ritual was the same in each case: Benflis visited a private home and disappeared into a living-room with a few local elders for less than a quarter of an hour. After one such meeting, the FLN leader's campaign manager remarked with satisfaction that Benflis had successfully negotiated 'at least seven thousand votes in only five minutes' – though he did not divulge what was promised in exchange for the votes. Asked whether he was sure the tribal leader's choice would be respected by the entire tribe, he answered: 'Sure! These tribes vote like one single man.' Judging from the FLN's overwhelming victory in the 2002 elections – both parliamentary and communal – the strategy of personalization as well as of negotiations for the collective vote with what Migdal (1988) termed 'strongmen'⁴ appeared to have paid off.

The above anecdote reveals a number of elements important for understanding popular notions of power relations and political practices. It illustrates an apparent desire for strong personalized leadership, the importance of informal negotiations and the fact that local notables, at least in certain regions, decided over the collective vote. Politically relevant elites banked on these notions of politics, catered to them, and thus contributed to reproducing them. Yet, it would be wrong to reduce Algerian socio-cultural perceptions of what constituted politics solely to a submissive relationship to authority. Indeed, these perceptions could be ambiguous or even come

across as paradoxical. Rebellion, for instance, was also an important element of Algerian elite and non-elite notions of how politics functioned. What may look like a paradox – complete obedience and violent rebellion – can, as Hammoudi (1997: 153), explaining the foundations of Moroccan authoritarianism, convincingly demonstrated, be part of one and the same ambivalent relationship between ‘individuals and their chief – whether it be a political chief, their father, the masters who introduce them to the arts and knowledge, or their superiors in a bureaucratic setting’ (ibid.: 3). This relationship guiding perceptions and practices of politics originated outside the political sphere.

1.1. Reflections of social organization in political structures and practices

A common Algerian saying was that in order to understand how politics functioned, one had to understand how the family functioned. Bourdieu (1958: 21) wrote almost four decades ago about Kabylia that the entire social system was modelled after the ‘noble’ family, that no difference existed between domestic organization (*‘res privatae’*) and political organization (*‘res republicae’*), and that blood ties constituted the archetype of every social and particularly political tie.

Obviously, the Algerian social and political organization in the Bouteflika era substantially differed from the times of Bourdieu’s research. Culturalist theoretical models, such as Sharabi’s (1988: 7, 26ff.), which simply transposed Arab family structures to Arab politics – portraying the father as the ruler and the ruled as the passive, obedient child – have rightly been criticized, not least because they ignored the fact that the omnipotence of patriarchy has been weakened by social transformations (Camau and Geisser 2003: 84–5; Hammoudi 1997).

However, the organizational resemblance between family and political structures in contemporary Algeria cannot be dismissed completely, and symbolic and emotional references to the family formed one important aspect of Algerian power relations. The latter could manifest themselves in small (daily) political rituals. For instance, each time the president left the country or arrived from a trip abroad, every single minister was expected to be there ‘to wave him goodbye or welcome him back’.⁵ Contemporary Algerian leaders incorporated not only characteristics linked to the function or figure of ‘the father’,⁶ but also to that of the tribal leader, the village elder and the ‘classic’ Arab charismatic leader, the *zāim*.⁷ References to specific values and modes of social organization, including the family, could be found in the internal rules of a movement such as the Kabyle protest movement, within parties as well as in generalized perceptions of what constituted strong leadership.

Example 1: The Kabyle protest movement

The Kabyle protest movement was referred to both as the Kabyle citizens’ movement and as the *aârouch*. As ICG (2003: 14) pointed out, the former

stressed 'a modern, democratic character and purpose', the latter a 'traditional' form of Kabyle self-organization, in which the *aârouch* were an umbrella structure comprising a number of villages. While neither label correctly encapsulated the movement, they highlighted the paradoxes of a movement that comprised elements of 'traditional' social organization and at the same time featured a revolutionary discourse and voiced 'modern' (democratic) political goals.⁸ The *coordinations* that constituted the formal structure of the movement prided themselves in having a *code de l'honneur*, and anyone who deviated from the movement's uncompromising line was accused of having betrayed the *code de l'honneur*.⁹ This code was derived from the concept of family honour that had been central to traditional social organization of Kabyle society, and that was also found in local political organization (Bourdieu 1958: 9–25). As Bourdieu (*ibid.*: 22) pointed out, the role and function of the *tajma'th* – constituting the main level of Kabyle self-organization and consisting of an assembly of village elders – within the village were comparable to those of the father within the family. The assembly, in which each lineage of the village was represented, was not only to administrate, set the rules and arbitrate, but also to defend the collective honour of the group or the village.

Practices within the Kabyle *coordinations* that stood in contrast to the movement's revolutionary rhetoric and its claim to being a citizens' movement could to a certain extent be explained with the reinvention and reactivation of elements found in the *tajma'th*. The almost complete exclusion of women in the protest movement was one such example. Women had no access to the traditional village assemblies, and the *coordinations* – while formally not excluding women – emulated this pattern. In meetings comprising 200–300 delegates from the *coordinations* it was not uncommon to find but a single woman (Boukir 2002:11).¹⁰ Another characteristic of the *tajma'th* adopted by the Kabyle protest movement was decision-making by consensus. This practice was responsible for the Kabyle's reputation of having a 'democratic tradition', even though access to the *tajma'th* was predetermined by birth rather than open to broad participation. Hence, a further parallel between the 'archaic' *tajma'th* and the 'modern' movement was that both put significant weight on internal participatory procedures but were not representative and/or democratic with regard to the larger context. The *coordinations* excluded participation of associations and independent trade unions, and the Kabyle population in 2002 was complaining about suffering from the movement's 'dictatorship' which, for example, expressed itself in the movement's efforts at forcing an election boycott on the region.¹¹ Moreover, the collective and consensus-oriented type of leadership favoured informal charismatic leaders, such as Belaïd Abrika.¹² Though the movement's leaders, according to their attitudes, generally fell into the earlier discussed category of the neo-revolutionary, the movement's structures and dynamics created a corridor of action that prevented the movement's leaders from emancipating and distancing themselves from misogynous practices

and from reproducing authoritarian and informal forms of leadership they claimed to despise.

Example 2: Political parties

Bouandel (2002) argued that one handicap in the Algerian transition process from authoritarianism was the weakness of the country's parties, their lack of commitment to democratic principles, their not being rooted in civil society and the many efforts by regime elites to manipulate them. While none of these arguments can be refuted, Bouandel's analysis only scratches the surface of the problem of parties because it treats parties as if they were floating somewhere above society, and ignores the fact that they did not act in a social vacuum but reflected common perceptions of politics found among elites as well as the wider population. A principal reason parties were not rooted in civil society was that the emergence of both parties and civil society was hampered by similar factors: Algerian parties, with few exceptions, tended to be inspired by 'traditional' social and political organization, even if their formal organization as defined by party statutes did not differ substantially from democratic parties in Western Europe. What Harbi (2001: 207) stated about the inner life of the FLN in 1954 still held for Algerian party politics five decades later: 'What one finds here are relations of power and influence in which personal relations and family and regional ties fuse. It is less a matter of pure political relations than of community relations expressed in a modern language.'¹³ One consequence of such party structures was that competition within parties – as opposed to personal rivalries – was extremely rare.

Democracy and competition deficits in internal structures and in decision-making processes were features shared by all Algerian parties in the early 2000s. Mouloud Hamrouche, the man instrumental in initiating the political and economic liberalization process between 1989 and 1991, lamented in 2004 that members of all Algerian parties could neither change their leadership nor review their party programmes.¹⁴ The style of leadership in Algerian parties could be described as charismatic in the Weberian sense.¹⁵ Most Algerian parties represented in the 1997 or 2002 parliaments were led by a dominant figure who had founded the party and whose re-election – if it had taken place at all – was never seriously contested. This was true for the RCD (led by Said Sadi), the MSP (led by Mahfoudh Nahnah until his death in 2003) and the FFS (led by Hocine Aït-Ahmed); in the case of the PT, its president in 2004, Louisa Hanoune, had been a party co-founder. In the early 2000s, none of these parties had a strong and/or publicly known number two or three.¹⁶ If they temporarily had such figures, these persons were forced to leave the party in the event of diverging opinions between them and the party leader¹⁷ – the only exception being Abdallah Djaballah, who was himself dethroned as leader of Ennahda in 1999 by some of the party's MPs, and who in 2004 again faced resistance from within his party.¹⁸

The political implications – both within parties and on national political life – of the charismatic leadership style was particularly evident in the case of the party that featured the most democratic platform, the Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS).¹⁹ The FFS, a Berberophone party with its popular base mainly in Kabylia, had been led since it was founded in 1963 by the charismatic Hocine Aït-Ahmed, one of two of the revolution's nine historic leaders still alive in 2004.²⁰ Despite living in Swiss exile, Aït-Ahmed remained the party's sole and largely uncontested president. Geographically remote from the activities and developments within the party, he had to rely on 'those making pilgrimages to Lausanne' (the Swiss domicile of Aït-Ahmed) and 'whispering into his ears', a situation that created a court-like atmosphere of intrigue.²¹ The party also had the character of a family enterprise, with two key positions in the party being occupied by nephews of Aït-Ahmed; one of them, Karim Balloul, was responsible for international relations in the party executive and was said to be more influential than the first secretary.²² the party's official number two, who ran the party's daily affairs.

The fact that Aït-Ahmed completely dominated party politics, that most party cadres strongly idolized him, that criticizing him within the party remained a taboo, and that the first secretaries – exchanged almost yearly by Aït-Ahmed – tended to be his mouthpieces, led to jokes in the Algerian media²³ as well as to resentment within the party. However, publicly voiced dissent was not tolerated, and several in-house rebellions in the early 2000s ended with the rebels being kicked out of the party and accused of being 'co-opted and manipulated by the *pouvoir*'.²⁴ This put the FFS cadres, most of whom fell into the elite category of 'radical democrat', in an awkward situation: they were pushing for democratization on the national level, but could not afford or did not want to voice demands for more democracy within their own party. Their choice was either to compromise on their understanding of democracy or to leave the party. Those members who did leave the party and founded a new one, however, soon ended in political oblivion.

The FLN, in strong contrast to the FFS and the other above-mentioned parties, had experienced three changes of leadership in the 1990s,²⁵ and as of 2003 featured strong power struggles between the Benflis and Bouteflika factions. Yet this party too witnessed efforts to install a *zaïm*. The eighth FLN congress, for instance, at which Benflis tried to give the party a new, young and modern image, and at which he extended his grip over the party to the detriment and anger of Bouteflika, was described by critical observers as an example of political archaism and of '*zaïmisme*' because of the way the leader was celebrated and unanimity was staged.²⁶ The earlier presented anecdote from Benflis' election campaign testified to the symbolic reduction of the party and its programme to one person. This focus on the person of the party's secretary general resounded throughout the 2002 election campaigns. An FLN candidate in the elections for the 2002 Tizi Ouzou

assembly, for instance, had his personal programme and political views published on an entire newspaper page – the picture on the page, however, did not show him but Benflis. Photos of party leaders were also found at the top of party lists designed for the ballot box in the regional and local elections. Illiteracy was the obvious reason for this, though it could be argued that the pictures also catered to elite and popular perceptions that persons rather than programmes mattered.

The FLN's younger sister, the RND, had also seen a change of leadership since it was founded in 1997. In contrast to most Algerian party leaders, the secretary general of this party in the Bouteflika era, Ahmed Ouyahia, did not try to convey the aura of a *zaïm*, but made efforts to present his leadership as young, modern and participatory.²⁷ In practice, however, participation remained very limited: the secretary general appointed the fifteen members of the executive, and Ouyahia made every effort to increase his powers, for instance by dropping several high-profile MPs who were not completely loyal from election lists in 2002 and by naming persons to the conseil national, the party's second highest body, whose candidacies had been rejected and opposed by party bodies in the provinces they came from.²⁸

The pattern in Algerian parties of a charismatic leadership style (even if the individual leaders could not in all cases be considered charismatic) with authoritarian tendencies led to problems of succession – again an important issue raised by Weber (1973: 485–6) in the context of the charismatic type of leadership. When an Algerian party lost its leader – be it because of his death or because he left the party – it was in danger of disappearing overnight. Ennahda, the party presided over by Abdallah Djaballah until 1999, lost all but one of its thirty-four seats in the 2002 parliamentary elections, while Djaballah's new party, Islah (MRN), managed to get forty-three seats. In late 2003, MSP was facing a similar fate after the death of its strong and charismatic leader Mahfoudh Nahnah. The party had already suffered election losses in the 2002 parliamentary elections that could be attributed to its undecided semi-opposition politics but that were also an effect of Nahnah's failing health and lack of energy during the election campaign – or, to again resort to Weberian (*ibid.*) terminology, to a loss of charisma. The question of Nahnah's succession within the party was resolved in a transparent and fairly participatory process. None of the MSP figures pleading for collective leadership or unsuccessfully campaigning for the presidency left the party after Aboudjerra Soltani was elected its new leader.²⁹ This process was atypical for political life in Algeria since it left the impression that within the MSP the party's cause – be it holding on to the party's privileged position as a coalition partner, be it the struggle for social and political change through participation rather than outright contestation – and the efforts at building up a strong new charismatic leadership were more important than individual power squabbles.

The positive connotation of charismatic leadership could be seen as surprising in a country that had been led to independence by a collective

leadership and that cultivated the ideal of such leadership.³⁰ However, political practice had never (fully) lived up to this ideal.³¹ In the early 2000s, after a decade of collective leadership with no discernable *primus inter pares*, the popular desire for a strong, identifiable decision-maker and clear power structures was particularly evident and could partly explain Bouteflika's overwhelming election victory in 2004. Interestingly, even excessive manifestations of force by Bouteflika and his entourage, such as repressing the private press hostile to the president, twisting the arm of judges or physical intimidation of prominent Benflis supporters, seemed to play in Bouteflika's favour rather than against him. Similarly, accusations that he was aiming at the near absolute power of his Tunisian neighbour Ben Ali³² found no negative echo at the ballot box – possibly because Bouteflika's manifestations of force were accompanied by his ability to generously distribute state funds for large infrastructure projects during the election campaign. An additional explanation for the strong backing of Bouteflika could have been the army's refusal to ostentatiously assume the role of *Königsmacher*, for this denied the country what had been its compass for decades: the army's will. In fact, the army's repeated declarations that it would not endorse a candidate in 2004 were greeted not only with disbelief but also with a feeling of discomfort. As the conflict between Benflis and Bouteflika escalated within the FLN structures, electoral candidates and newspaper commentators publicly called upon the army to intervene in politics.³³ These calls could be interpreted in several ways: they could reflect a real concern over the president's increasing authoritarianism. But they could also be tied to the hope that the army would endorse one or several of Bouteflika's competitors and thus 'create' a new strong leader. After all, they mirrored a refusal by many politically relevant elites and, arguably, even by a (large) share of the wider population to accept an important aspect of democratic rules of the political game: that is, to 'accept uncertainty' (Przeworski 1991: 45). Accepting uncertainty would have meant first and foremost accepting that the outcome of an election would not be known in advance.

1.2 Violence and the historic frame of contemporary political rhetoric and action

Algerian history has been one strongly marked by violence. The country suffered from 132 years of oppression by the French colonial power. It went through the first anti-colonial war led by Emir Abd El Kader in the first decades of French rule and through an extremely bloody second war to gain independence.³⁴ In the 1990s, moreover, it experienced a civil war leaving between 100,000 and 200,000 Algerians dead. Martinez (2000: 1) argued that the dynamics of civil war had their roots 'in a war-oriented *imaginaire* in which violence is a form of accumulation and wealth'. The belief in the practice of violence as a way to improve one's social position was, according to Martinez (*ibid.*: 10–19), already present in Ottoman Algeria, and the civil war's

emirs took their inspiration from historic figures for whom violence had presented a track for social and political advancement and whom Martinez termed 'political bandits'. These emblematic figures, whose 'success stories' according to Martinez modelled the imaginative frame of Algerian actors, ranged from the Corsair, the pirate in the Mediterranean Sea, to the Caïd, the local notable officially recognized by the colonial authorities, and the Colonel, the ex-ALN officer. Leaning on terminology borrowed from Bayart *et al.* (1997), Martinez (*ibid.*: 10) argued that this process of advancement 'placed violence in a "cultural code of social improvement"'.

The problem with Martinez' argument is that it reduces the 'choice for war' to economic interests and to ambitions to climb up the social ladder. As a result, conflicting visions of social and political orders as possible reasons for violence are excluded. Moreover, it is quite far-fetched to generally assume that individual decisions to get involved in the anti-colonial insurgency were guided primarily by the desire for social mobility and the accumulation of wealth. The most serious danger of Martinez' argument, however, is that of culturalist essentialism, as Roberts (2003: 256) rightly pointed out. Indeed, Martinez' war-oriented *imaginaire* insinuates that Algerians had for centuries seen and still saw only one way of getting ahead: violence. Yet dismissing Martinez' argument completely risks throwing out the baby with the bathwater. It can hardly be disputed that violence presented one of several ways for accumulation of both symbolic prestige and material goods and thus, even if indirectly, served as a means to upward mobility in Algeria, be it for ex-ALN officers after independence or for the emirs operating in the suburbs of Algiers during the civil war.³⁵

This study does not, however, seek to analyse the role violence played in the social and economic advancement of members of the PRE. Rather, its interest is to understand the role attributed to violence in political processes – be it popular uprisings, acts of force against state property and authorities, intra-elite violence or the use of force by state authorities against the population – and how this affected the elite's corridors of action. A second question related directly to the perception of violence in political processes is how the main historic frame of reference of elite and non-elites alike, the anti-colonial struggle, continued to shape elite corridors of action in the Bouteflika era.

In interviews conducted with over a hundred Algerian elites, perceptions of the role of violence in politics usually came in 'through the back door' when interviewees were asked how political change in Algeria would come about. Interviewees tended to give diametrically opposed answers to the question of how they – individually or collectively – intended to bring about change, and to the question of how change would 'really happen'. On the one hand, interviewees listed a plethora of means by which they hoped to achieve political change in the short, medium or long term. The means cited depended on the interviewee's political outlook and could include awareness campaigns and education reforms aimed at strengthening civil values, civil

rights and civil society. Other means mentioned, such as civil disobedience or election and tax boycotts, were based on the credo that such action would eventually lead to the collapse of the existing order, or at least force the core elite to engage in more participatory decision-making processes. Other means listed – for instance pushing for good governance practices, economic reforms, and the strengthening of the judiciary – stemmed from the notion that structural changes in other areas would eventually lead to the collapse of the existing political system and its specific practices.

Yet when interviewees were asked what was the most likely way change would come about, virtually every interlocutor named factors that had to do with some form of violence, such as violent mass uprisings or even another civil war. Interestingly, violence was seen as the most likely factor for change by all elite types. Most interlocutors stressed that change through violence was not what they hoped would happen, but that political change in Algeria had in the past come about primarily through the use of force. Examples cited included: the war against the French, which had led to independence; the 1988 mass uprisings, which pushed Chadli to liberalize in order to stay in power; and the uprisings in Kabylia as of 2001, which had compelled the government to make concessions such as the constitutional recognition of Tamazight as a national language.

Obviously, there was also awareness of the cases in which resorting to violence had not brought about (any of) the desired changes, the most notable example being that of the Islamist *maquis* in the 1990s. Yet one could argue with Martinez (2000) that some of the *maquis*' emirs had accumulated wealth and, after they were given amnesty in the wake of the *Concorde civile*, a socially prestigious position. In cases such as that of Madani Mezrag, one of the Armée Islamique du Salut's ex-leaders, it was not to be excluded that in the future he might even occupy a formal political position.³⁶ As Roberts (2003: 255) put it very pointedly: 'to say that access to power is via the *maquis* is a very straightforward idea which will remain plausible until Algerian authorities allow another mode of action to work'.

The fact that the two major changes of the political order in 'modern' Algeria, the end of colonization and the end of the single-party system, had both been triggered by the use of force rather than by negotiations, clearly had a deep impact on perceptions of how politics functioned. They led to a historically rooted belief that violence rather than negotiations would lead to political change – one could speak of 'a *maquis* as a track to success' belief or mindset.³⁷ Even if most actors interviewed, with the exception of a few neo-revolutionaries, stressed that they opposed any form of violence, they appeared to perceive violence as a force more powerful than them. When confronted with the statement that apparently most Algerians believed in force as the primary motor of change, there was a tendency to shrug and to state that this was 'a big problem'.³⁸

Hence, the implication of this mindset – shared by elites and non-elites – was that most politically relevant actors working for change in a peaceful

step-by-step approach did so with means they believed in from an ethical and moral point of view, but did not believe would lead to success. It is thus possible to argue that the widespread '*maquis* as a track to success' mindset produced a certain political inertia or encouraged the use of force – depending on the elite type in question. Neo-revolutionaries such as Belaïd Abrika were ambivalent regarding the use of outright force, but did not vocally oppose the destruction of property.³⁹ On the very other end of the elite spectrum, 'dinosaurs' such as interior minister Zerhouni, who were determined to keep the status quo but also believed that change was most likely to be brought about 'by the street', sought to immediately and brutally crush insurgencies and not allow for political compromise. As for reform-oriented elite types – for instance, the RCD's Said Sadi – the above mindset tended to make them wait for a push from the street, while in the meantime putting up – even if grudgingly – with the existing system.⁴⁰ The politics of contesters and radical democrats such as Aït-Ahmed – though stressing the need for an impetus from outside Algeria, i.e. international pressure, for political change to come about – also welcomed 'street dynamics'.⁴¹

However, after the end of a decade that had been marked by brute violence, outright calls for the use of force – be it against competitors, opponents, the population or core elites – appeared not to be an option for politically relevant elites. During the 2004 election campaign there were some acts of violence involving adherents of either Benflis or Bouteflika, including physical attacks on followers of one's competitor as well as the destruction of the latter's local election headquarters.⁴² Yet one could not speak of a generalized practice. One corollary of the 'clash' between the '*maquis* as a track to success' mindset and agendas that tended to exclude the use of force was that allusions to violence were relegated to the symbolic level. It was, for example, not uncommon to find newspaper caricatures that alluded to the death of one or the other politician.⁴³

Language used by members of the PRE as well as by non-elites was not only full of exaggerations such as calling political adversaries 'fascists'⁴⁴ or 'terrorists'⁴⁵ – and thus implying that resistance against them was not only legitimate but honourable – but also drew strongly on terminology coming from the times of the war against the French. One presidential candidate in the 2004 elections, the outsider Ali Fawzi Rebaïne, ran his campaign on the promise, among other things, to 'purify' the 'polluted' Algerian state institutions and remove all *harkis*, their offspring and all persons with French-Algerian dual citizenship from top positions in state institutions. He also announced that he would change the constitution to make sure no *harki* or child of a *harki* could become president.⁴⁶ Even forty years after the war the term *harki* still served as a populist rhetoric club to morally disqualify opponents, to socially ostracize them, and to catapult them out of political life. It was used not only by elites close to the regime to discredit Islamists but also by Kabyle protesters when one of their leaders showed too much willingness for compromise with the authorities.⁴⁷

With the violent struggle against the colonizer presenting the Algerian success story *par excellence* in collective memory,⁴⁸ it was logical that political and populist rhetoric needed to draw on terminology from that period in order to maximize the legitimacy of the speaker. Islamist presidential candidate Djaballah in his campaign, for instance, sought to establish parallels between the governing elites in the Bouteflika era and the colonial authorities by speaking of the need to 'liberate the country from political colonialism, from economic colonialism and from administrative colonialism'.⁴⁹ While such calls were primarily aimed at de-legitimizing those in command, they also tried to play on the collective memory and on emotions, and could even be understood as calls on the population to stand up. No Algerian politically relevant elite could afford to lay the past *ad acta* and to completely forgo tributes to the revolutionary struggle and its symbols, notably the martyrs. Even when elites, such as Benflis, were aware that 'we always speak of the past, but the generations born after independence have other problems',⁵⁰ they continued to evoke the armed struggle and its 'glorious martyrs' incessantly, and thus led to the reproduction of the past as an essential part of present politics.⁵¹ That Benflis, who himself had not fought the revolution but was the son and brother of a *chahid*, had no choice other than to pay tributes to the revolution was made obvious by statements of his foes such as: 'The FLN belongs to us' – meaning to those that participated in the war of liberation.⁵² Critical discussion of the revolutionary period thus remained a taboo for politically ambitious actors who had not fought the war. Even those who deemed such a debate necessary – for instance, some neo-revolutionaries or radical democrats – could or did not want to risk completely disengaging themselves from the dominant mindset. As a result, all elite types made efforts to establish links between the glorious past and themselves, and to position themselves in the natural line of succession of the heroes of the revolution. Positioning oneself within the larger framework of the revolution was a further and vital constitutive element of all elite corridors of action.

1.3 The elusive 'concept' of *le pouvoir*

The earlier described desire for and practice of strongly personalized leadership stood in sharp contrast to widespread popular perceptions of who really governed the country. In discussions about political decision-making, Algerians at one point invariably referred to '*le pouvoir*' in French, literally translated 'the power' or 'the force' in English; this was generally also the case for those mainly speaking Arabic.⁵³ Elections were seen as manipulated by *le pouvoir*, decisions were taken by *le pouvoir*, the Kabyle *coordinations* were infiltrated by *le pouvoir*, etc.⁵⁴ *Le pouvoir* in Algerian colloquial use carried multiple meanings. It could signify persons, institutions and 'the state as such', as well as a specific system of domination, i.e. the specific nature of the regime. Use of the term, moreover, served to fulfil multiple

functions that ranged from the delegation of responsibility and the affirmation of powerlessness to presenting a rhetoric valve for popular outrage relatively harmless for individual core elites.

References to an elusive force or power were no exception in the Arab context – in other Arab countries the regime was commonly termed *as-sulta*, the literal equivalent of *le pouvoir* in Arabic.⁵⁵ Yet what was remarkable in Algeria was that the term *le pouvoir* was not only used by ‘the powerless’ but had also been adopted by actual and formal politically relevant elites. Ex-core elite members, such as Taleb Ibrahimi or Mouloud Hamrouche, used the term,⁵⁶ and so did members of the second circle elite in the Bouteflika era.⁵⁷ When asked what or whom they exactly meant with *pouvoir*, however, members of the Algerian PRE – including several ministers, presidential and prime ministerial advisers and top bureaucrats – gave (strongly) diverging answers. In rare instances specific names of generals were given – in which case the term was sometimes specified and ‘*le pouvoir réel*’ used. More common, however, was the answer ‘*les décideurs militaires*’ or vague references to ‘*l’armée*’ – that is, to an institution. For some interviewees *le pouvoir* also meant or included the president or presidency, some figures in the bureaucracy and economic actors. Indeed, depending on the interlocutor, the *pouvoir* was ‘changing its shape’ and hence was reminiscent of an amoeba-like creature. Not explicit but implicit in most answers was, furthermore, the notion that *le pouvoir* also meant a specific way of exercising power. Several MPs, when asked why a vote had gone this or that way, shrugged and said: ‘That’s because of the *pouvoir*.’ When they were asked to specify, it turned out that what they meant was highly informal pressure and lobbying work by elusive networks linked to core and second circle elites, or to ‘*les services*’.⁵⁸ The term *le pouvoir* thus also referred to a system of domination in which political decisions ‘somehow happened’ outside formal political institutions, and not just in an informal but also in an unintelligible way even for politically relevant actors.

Decision-making processes in Algeria had been informal for decades, as testimony from ex-regime insiders confirmed.⁵⁹ Yet by the late 1990s such processes appeared to have become more informal, and thus more enigmatic than ever, mainly because there was no longer one clearly identifiable decision-making centre. In the Bouteflika era ample evidence regarding the informal and even accidental functioning of *le pouvoir* was brought forward by ex-core and second circle elites.⁶⁰ General Rachid Benyelles, who knew all the prime decision-makers well as colleagues from his days as secretary general of the ministry of defence, described the military *décideurs* in the Bouteflika era as ‘a club of friends, drinking coffee, discussing strategic issues and coming to decisions in a very, very informal way; these decisions are then implemented again in informal ways’.⁶¹ A second circle elite in the early days of Bouteflika’s presidency, ex-prime minister Ahmed Benbitour, describing his working relationship with the president, spoke of no regular institutionalized meetings between the president and his prime minister, of

‘complete disorganization’, and of decisions being taken on the spur of the moment, often after informal consultation with people outside formal political bodies.⁶²

Yet even if political decision-making took place largely outside formal political processes and formal political institutions, the mantra-like use of the term *le pouvoir* by politically relevant elites not only mirrored a certain ‘reality’ but could be seen as a handy instrument for members of the PRE. First, it allowed all politically relevant elites – regardless of the circle they were in – to publicly delegate responsibility to an obscure place that required no clearer definition and thus relieved the speaker of any further explanation. In fact, the ritual of shrugging and referring to the higher force of *le pouvoir* was reminiscent of the ritualistic referrals to Allah so common in daily life in Arab-Muslim countries.⁶³ By bringing the *pouvoir* into play, most second and third circle elites could assert their real or perceived relative powerlessness. This could serve to justify their going along with the stream, and to relieve party leaders or MPs from the need to justify political immobility or the absence of initiative *vis-à-vis* their constituency, i.e. to deflect the demand for accountability.⁶⁴ The impact on elite corridors of action of such notions of power thus was – similar to the above-discussed ‘*maquis* as a track to success’ mindset – that they encouraged passivity, since they relieved most politically relevant elites from the duty to perform and to keep promises.

Second, the ‘concept’ of *le pouvoir* presented a valve for political discontent that did not pose a direct threat to individual core elite members. Slogans such as ‘*pouvoir assassins*’, commonly chanted in anti-regime manifestations across the country, were without doubt more acceptable to core elites than slogans such as ‘Larbi Belkheir assassin’ or ‘Toufik assassin’ would have been. The term *pouvoir* thus served to preclude individual responsibility and could even be used by those in power to deflect responsibility from themselves. Hence, it could be argued that the core elites had every interest in the continued popular use of this term, despite some of its negative connotations, because it allowed them to uphold an – even if somewhat fictitious – anonymity.

A third corollary of the frequent use of the term *le pouvoir* by both elites and non-elites was that it contributed to thickening the fog from the lack of transparency that lay over the Algerian system. Speaking of *le pouvoir* precluded the need for closer examination of structures and actors. Moreover, and extremely importantly, it blocked the view on change. Not surprisingly, answers to who constituted the *pouvoir* at the end of Bouteflika’s first term still primarily circled around certain generals, even though it had become evident that the president had also become one of the prime decision-makers. Perceptions of politics being run by an obscure force thus conditioned non-elite expectations of elected representatives and of the government’s range of manoeuvre as well as of the rationality of politics: if delegates of the Kabyle *coordinations* verbally attacked the Berberophone political parties, there was

no need for these parties to self-critically pose the question of whether they could indeed have done better; it was much easier to state that the Kabyle protest movement was manipulated by the *pouvoir* or even a creation of the latter.⁶⁵ Elite corridors of action thus were also influenced by the – for elites comforting – possibility of declaring a higher force, the *pouvoir*, responsible for one's inconsistent or unpopular actions.

In the early 2000s, however, there were indications that the use of *le pouvoir* to avoid listing specific names could in the near future become outdated, for there were increasing tendencies in the private press to put names of specific actors to political actions and decisions instead of attributing them to a cloudy and abstract *pouvoir*.⁶⁶ Also, the outcome of the 2004 elections could be taken as an indicator of a widespread desire for a single identifiable leader. Yet the other important aspect inherent to notions and practices of *le pouvoir*, the highly informal and thus obscure mode of decision-making and of political transactions, seemed anything but *passé* in the Bouteflika era. These modes of decision-making and of political transactions had much to do with elite embeddedness in economic and social networks.

2 Embeddedness of elites

Ottaway (2003: 180ff.) argued that the outcome of transitions to democracy could only be democratic if pro-democracy elites were embedded, meaning that they had 'ties to constituencies whose interests they represent and defend'. In cases in which the outcome of transition processes was semi-authoritarianism rather than democracy – as Ottaway suggested (ibid: 181) – political elites were not strongly embedded, and pro-democracy elites the least embedded of all elites. The outcome of the Algerian presidential elections in 2004, arguably the freest presidential elections in the country's history, appeared to support Ottaway's line of argument. The reform-oriented Ali Benflis was not able to mobilize a large constituency and performed poorly, and the – arguably – most democratic of all candidates, Said Sadi, did even worse.⁶⁷ Bouteflika, the least political reform-oriented of the three, on the other hand, appeared to have a huge constituency whose interests he represented and defended.

Yet understanding elite embeddedness primarily as an empowering factor and as a question of social and political ties, as Ottaway (ibid.) does, runs the danger of downplaying the fact that embeddedness of Algerian elites also resulted in numerous and even contradictory constraints and obligations linked to elites' economic ties. While the various links between elites and non-elites in Algeria could be of a very different nature, they had one common denominator: they were based on notions of exchange and reciprocity and in most cases could be described as clientelist in the way Eisenstadt and Roniger (1981: 276–7) defined such relations.⁶⁸ Ties between Bouteflika and his constituency, for instance, had much to do with his ability to distribute oil rent-related state funds, as will be discussed below.

Possibly the biggest potential trap in the analysis of contemporary political developments in Algeria is to read them primarily as political processes and transactions rather than as social and economic ones. Algerian politically relevant elites in the Bouteflika era – regardless of their political attitudes – were embedded in complex webs of social and economic ties that linked them to other elites, non-elites and the international community. These ties could be of a social order and consist of ‘primordial’ loyalties, or they could reflect ‘modern’ forms of such loyalties and belongings, for instance revolutionary networks. But even those ties that were at first sight of a social order often had an economic dimension in that they comprised the exchange of favours or goods. Other elite ties were of a squarely economic nature and related to the rentier nature of the Algerian economy. Finally, there were international treaties and implicit or explicit international standards through which Algerian elites were linked to international actors (cf. Figure II.2). Embeddedness as it is used in this study thus extends beyond Ottaway’s understanding of the term in that it not only focuses on ties between elites and existing or potential constituencies, but also analyses the larger spectrum of elite ties with an impact on elite corridors of action.

2.1 The clientelist frame: notions of reciprocity and modes of transaction

Hachemaoui (2003: 35ff.) argued that Algerian deputies, even if they were co-opted by the regime, remained (primarily) representatives of social groups, unions, tribes, a region, etc. In order to attain this position of representation, aspiring deputies – termed by Hachemaoui (ibid.: 62) ‘agents of clientelist mediation’ – had to engage in a *‘jeu social’*, i.e. in numerous transactions within a process of social exchange between them and a plethora of institutions and of collective and individual actors on the local, regional and national levels (ibid.). Favours and goods exchanged or promised in order to get on parliamentary lists ranged from jobs, financial aid and access to rentier networks to tax reductions. A striking feature of these exchanges and relations was the difficulty at times in establishing who was the client and who was the patron – moral obligations went both ways. This did not mean that such relationships were egalitarian but that they were dynamic and subject to rapidly changing conjunctures. Actors involved, moreover, upheld the fiction – or ‘the social lie’ as Hachemaoui (ibid.: 50), based on Marcel Mauss’ elaborations on the gift (and counter-gift), called it – that these exchanges had a voluntary character, when in fact they were based on obligations and economic interest. To reduce these relations to a simple logic appeared difficult, for they combined contradictory traits such as inequality with solidarity and material exchange with a moral of disinterest (ibid.).

While Hachemaoui’s (2003) study focused on certain actors (candidates for national parliament) in a certain time frame (pre-election period), and while it presented an exception regarding the wealth of detail in its empirical

evidence, indications of the clientelist mechanisms and practices he exposed could be found in other contexts as well. An indication of how widespread questionable practices of exchange were in communal elections was the exorbitantly high number of mayors elected in 1997 who ran into legal troubles because of corruption, cronyism and mismanagement of public goods – 349 mayors, that is 20 per cent of all Algerian mayors, had been prosecuted by 2002, and 123 of them were found guilty.⁶⁹ One year after the 2002 communal elections, moreover, 1,050 members of *Assemblées Populaires Communales* had been suspended from their functions, and 500 condemned to prison sentences.⁷⁰ Permanent negotiations and renegotiations in a process of social exchange appeared to be the ‘fate’ of most (if not all) politically relevant actors in contemporary Algeria and of those aspiring to political relevance. It was not uncommon to have interview partners explain that they were placed on an election list because their family was rich and locally influential, and could thus ‘offer’ something to voters.⁷¹ Yet few politically relevant actors were ready to discuss favours and counter-favours in detail. The young entrepreneur A.L.,⁷² who could be counted in the third circle of the politically relevant elite, presented an exception.

Example: The Do ut Des track to political relevance

A.L.,⁷³ an economist and political scientist coming from a respected and well-off family in the western Algerian city of Tlemcen, founded a consulting firm in 1994 that specialized in strategic economic and political questions as well as issues of management, global marketing and public relations. His firm mediated between foreign governmental, non-governmental and multilateral organizations and Algerian governing elites and state institutions. A.L. himself (co-)administered projects for these foreign organizations (including the World Bank) and ran joint workshops on issues ranging from good governance, lobbying, anti-corruption and accountability to ISO-standards and journalists’ training. By 1999, A.L., who at that time was thirty-six years old, was successful enough to be included in the World Economic Forum’s yearly list of ‘100 Global Leaders for Tomorrow’.⁷⁴

In the early 2000s A.L. became personally involved in the training of the army’s first communication officers – according to him he had been the one to push for the introduction of such officers with the ANP’s general command. In addition to his ‘visible’ work, A.L. informally advised ministers and top officials in ministries, for instance during negotiations with the EU, and had close ties to the country’s most important business leaders as well as to several generals. He made no efforts to deny ties to the head of the DRS, General Mediène, or the fact that he was passing on information on foreigners to the *services*.⁷⁵ Overall, his sources of income and his activities oscillated between the transparent and the obscure. Indeed, former project partners accused him of preaching accountability and at the same time practising intransparency.⁷⁶

One of A.L.'s favourite terms was 'networking', and he made no secret of the fact that his networks were based on mutual favours. His doing favours for top elites had started in his high school days when he counted children of high militaries among his classmates and when he began dating the daughter of General Abdelmalek Guenaizia, who later became the head of the army's general command and belonged to the *janvieristes* in 1992. Guenaizia took a liking to A.L. and 'initiated' him into military circles. During that time A.L. began doing what he called 'favours' for some generals, not necessarily of a material nature. Though he refused to specify the exact nature of these favours, the hints he dropped pointed to information-gathering as well as to economic transactions and to pushing potential foreign investors in the 'right direction', i.e. towards the 'right' local partners.⁷⁷ His business relationships with Algerians were highly informal, and when called upon to solve a problem, he often succeeded with one phone call to a highly placed person. Whenever he was asked to act as an intermediary and demand a favour from someone – for instance, an interview with a high military figure – he either made it clear that he could not do so, because he could not afford to or did not want to owe something to that person, or he said that it was no problem because X or Y still owed him something. These 'debts' could be old, since reciprocity in this system of exchange did not need to be immediate; and the moral obligation of the 'indebted' appeared not to diminish but, if anything, increase over time.

Asked whether he was not afraid that he was playing this game of give and take in a way that was rather too high-profile, A.L. responded that he always made sure to have enough important people owing him something and that there were some people, among them high-ranking officers in the military, who owed him so much that he could keep on asking for favours for a while. Moreover, he did not bank on one patron but on several patrons. This minimized his risk of falling between all chairs and raised his chances of always being tied to a 'winner' in a system as factionalized as the Algerian one. It was evident that A.L.'s choices and actions were guided primarily by this web of moral and material obligations and counter-obligations. Based on his voiced political attitudes, A.L. fell into the elite category of nationalist reformer – his analysis of Algeria's problems and shortcomings in no way differed from those of the World Bank or foreign diplomats. But his actions appeared to follow no other pattern but the one imposed on him by the social game he was part of. Though he did not hold a formal political position and may have been unique in what he did professionally, the way in which he operated within the system and subordinated his reformist agenda to the needs of negotiating and renegotiating his personal ties with various patrons did not differ much from the ways in which nationalist reformers in the second circle negotiated with core elites as well as with third circle or non-elites, except that the members of the second circle spoke about it less openly.

Such webs of reciprocal obligations cut across the entire political spectrum and people owing A.L. 'something' or vice versa could be found in all political

parties; his ties even reached into the not officially recognized Islamo-Nationalist Wafa party of ex-regime insider Taleb Ibrahim. ⁷⁸ The notable exception in A.I.'s web was the FFS, whose cadres generally appeared to be less embedded in this sense. Processes of co-optation could generally be understood best in such a frame of give and take in which political agendas were playing a minor part, if any at all. A party like the MSP may indeed have on the one hand pursued its strategy of *entrisme* in the hope that this would enable it over time to alter the political and social order. On the other hand, successful co-optation of collective actors was also based on individual elites' inclusion or – if they were already included – stronger inclusion in certain 'reciprocity webs'. As Mehri (2003) pointed out, top MSP cadres, either personally or through their children, had become beneficiaries of the private distribution of public goods in exchange for regime solidarity. Mehri (ibid.) cited the example of Aboudjerra Soltani, who prior to becoming president of the MSP in 2003 had become a recipient of several parcels of state land through the mediation of his son. Reciprocity webs could thus be seen as a mechanism of recruitment and absorption of individuals into the system, as well as a factor strongly structuring elite corridors of action.

2.2 *Rentier structures and mentalities*

An important prerequisite for many of the transactions taking place in processes of 'social exchange' was the structure of the Algerian economy. The rentier economy facilitated, fuelled and reproduced such modes of transaction. Beblawi (1990), Luciani (1990a) and Pawelka (1993) have amply discussed the political corollaries of economic situations in which rent situations are predominant. A commonly found corollary is political systems in which the governing elites largely derive their legitimacy from the ability to distribute the rent and thus materially satisfy the clientele on which their power rests. Ex-regime insider and number two of Algerian counter-espionage Mohamed Samraoui (2003: 294) went as far as to argue for the Algerian case that the predatory control of the rent was the alpha and omega of the military police regime and its only ideology and 'raison d'être'. Samraoui (ibid.: 293) furthermore claimed that the rent was being managed by a few generals, mainly from the intelligence services, and that allegiances to networks of specific generals was the 'sine qua non' for promotions and access to a higher function in the state apparatus and for running a business or a newspaper. Such claims may have been an oversimplification and again too binary (the generals and their clients *vis-à-vis* the rest of the population) in view of the increasing complexities of the Algerian system and its elite, as discussed in Chapter IV, and in view of the intricacy of the 'social game' Hachemaoui (2003) depicted so well. But the importance of the rentier character of the Algerian economy for the ability of the Algerian system to function the way it did, to resist change and to allow its governing elites to hold on to power through the upholding of distributive networks, can hardly

be negated. A good indication of the many vested elite interests in the hydrocarbon rent was the enormous resistance – not only from unions but from within the government and Sonatrach, the national oil and gas company, and from the FCE – to a planned new hydrocarbon law proposed by Bouteflika in 2002.⁷⁹ Though part of the resistance was owed to the ‘nationalist reflex’ – that is, opposition to an opening up of oil and gas exploration to private companies – it also testified to a struggle between the president and his opponents over the control of the hydrocarbon sector and rent flows.

Selective distribution of oil and gas revenues to collective actors as well as to individuals had a broad spectrum of (political) functions in the early 2000s. It served to tie new elites into the system, to subsidize organizations that functioned as transmission belts, to weaken independent and opposition groups by creating parallel structures⁸⁰ and, last but not least, to temporarily pacify less privileged segments of the population through large public projects and to secure votes through such projects in pre-election times. However, ways of (informal) rent distribution as well as the nature of networks linked to the hydrocarbon rent remained one of the best-kept secrets in Algeria, with hardly any information in the Algerian press.⁸¹ Executives of international oil companies working in Algeria as well as Algerian ex-regime insiders estimated that up to 25 per cent of hydrocarbon sector revenues never even showed up in official statistics and were diverted to a number of networks linked to high military officers.⁸² Other allegations made were that individuals and collectives benefited from semi-legal or illegal forms of rent allocation during the process in which the rent was formally distributed to and within ministries.⁸³ It appeared, moreover, that Sonatrach in practice was exempt from the law requiring the supervision of foreign exchange transactions by the Bank of Algeria.⁸⁴ Yet much of this information remained at the level of speculation. Also, no reliable estimates as to the number of Algerians tied into networks linked to the oil rent existed. ICG (2001: 10) spoke of 600,000 to 800,000 individuals who were economically privileged ‘by their access to the regime – whether through patronage or as part of the elite’, whereby the patronage networks alluded to included not only those linked to oil and gas rents.

What could, however, be asserted with a high degree of certainty was that the number of indirect beneficiaries from the hydrocarbon rent fluctuated substantially, depending on political conjunctures and the level of oil prices. One perfectly legal way of indirect rent allocation was subsidies to failing state-owned enterprises. Those profiting from such subsidies were primarily the clientelist networks that formed around such enterprises.⁸⁵ Another source of indirect rent allocation was election campaigns. With record oil revenues in 2003 and with foreign exchange reserves reaching \$30 billion in the second half of 2003,⁸⁶ President Bouteflika in the run-up to the 2004 election campaign could afford to tour the entire country and distribute an average of 4 to 5 billion Algerian dinars (at the average 2003 conversion rate

the equivalent of US \$53 to 66 million) in each *wilaya* he visited.⁸⁷ The funds for these actions came from so-called supplementary budgets whose legal status was questionable.⁸⁸ Much of the money was spent for large public projects, such as housing projects, and the process of distribution was reminiscent of the times when the Algerian state had been an allocation state not only for clients of governing elites but for a majority of its citizens. Accusations that Bouteflika and some of his close co-operators used the hydrocarbon rent to fund the president's election campaign, for instance by financing support committees for Bouteflika,⁸⁹ became so widespread that the minister of energy and mines, Chakib Khelil, was forced to state that 'Sonatrach does not finance the candidate Bouteflika.'⁹⁰ The indirect but blunt efforts at buying votes were relentlessly attacked in the Algerian press, and even the IMF (2004: 15ff.) indirectly pointed to it by criticizing the increase in government spending. For 'the spender', however, the spree appeared to pay off; there could be little doubt that a central reason for the incumbent president's overwhelming election victory in 2004 was his ability to distribute money – something that strengthened perceptions of him being a strong leader.

The ways in which the hydrocarbon rent had been used by Algeria's post-independence elite created a generalized rentier atmosphere or what Beblawi (1990: 88) termed 'a rentier mentality', i.e. a mentality which results from a break in the work–reward causal link where income is not related to work in a production circuit or to risk-bearing, but is a 'windfall gain' related to chance and social situation. This mentality affected elites and non-elites alike, and it had repercussions for the overall economic activity of all Algerians, for as Dillman (2000: 3) importantly concluded 'the key to profit making was not production; rather, it was access to state-distributed rent'. This was also true for the private sector that functioned according to rules similar to those of the public economy.⁹¹ An important corollary of this situation was that there were few signs of the emergence of an entrepreneurial productive class independent of the state. This deprived Algeria not only of what historically had been a motor of democratic change in many countries, but contributed to the vertical loyalties of most elites remaining strong and horizontal (class) ones weak.

Economic restructuring induced by the IMF's intervention in Algeria in the mid-1990s did not substantially alter this situation. On the contrary, new rent-seeking opportunities beyond the state-distributed rent emerged, primarily for well-placed elites. Since all economic reforms had possible implications for existing modes and networks of rent distribution, most politically relevant elites had a stake in economic reforms and sought to influence their course, and in most cases, to block reform. As Werenfels (2002a: 13ff.) showed, privatization of state-owned enterprises was welcomed by elites not linked to networks surrounding state-owned enterprises, and fought fiercely by those profiting from such networks or from the fact that the bulk of these enterprises were unproductive and that Algeria depended

on imports. As a result of the different vested interests, privatization was implemented in incoherent bits and pieces – if at all (*ibid.*). This was true for most economic reforms. Dillman (2000: 3) argued that Algeria in 1998

was no closer to having an industrialized market economy based on institutionalized public–private ties than it had been twenty years before; instead, it had a liberalized economy operating through a circulation of rent among the military, a deficient public sector and a largely commercial private sector.

The rentier nature of the economy and the ensuing rentier mentality clearly had a strong impact on elite interests, strategies and choices. The inconsistencies and contradictions between elite attitudes and rhetoric, and elite practices, alluded to earlier in this chapter, could for example be partly explained with a dilemma reform-oriented elites faced: either they acted in accordance with their voiced convictions and risked political irrelevance, or they sought access to rent-distribution networks and had better chances at becoming or remaining politically relevant, but became engaged in semi-legal or outright illegal practices that contradicted their voiced convictions.⁹² This was particularly evident in the case of the nationalist reformer who, of all reform-oriented elite types, tended to be placed best within the system. Contesting elites belonging to the FFS or the Trotskyite PT, the radical democrat elite type, and Islamists from the MRN were generally less embedded in rentier structures. They tended to lament the rentier character of the Algerian economy and state and the resulting practices, and suggested specific measures to change this situation. Yet they too as individuals and as a collective (party) tended to struggle for access to positions that provided them with a (re-)distributive capacity – since their political relevance strongly depended on such a capacity. As Hachemaoui (2003: 45) observed, votes increasingly went to parties that could distribute benefits and dispense protection, and the only way to acquire the distributive capacities was by integrating (somewhat) into the system.

2.3 *Primordial loyalties and modern forms thereof*

Ties between elites and non-elites related to kinship, religious brotherhood and region were among the most easily detectable links with an impact on elite behaviour and choices in the Bouteflika era. In the first two decades of state-building, observers strongly diverged over whether loyalties resulting from kinship ties and religious brotherhood affiliations had become secondary for political processes and decision-making or not. Entelis (1983: 111) diagnosed that ‘colonialism and the revolution severely disrupted and undermined the impact of traditional and religious bases of power on national decision-making processes’. In the same year but in strong contrast, Roberts (1983: 106) argued that traditional solidarities had – to various

extents – survived the colonial impact, and that administrative action (and political outcome) was ‘determined in large measure by personal ties and obligations’. Roberts’ reading that such solidarities presented an important factor in administrative and political processes in post-colonial Algeria seemed highly plausible. Had these solidarities been severely disrupted, as Entelis claimed, their centrality in Algerian political life as of the late 1980s and particularly in the 1990s would have been hard to explain. Both Djerbal (1997) and Hachemaoui (2003) in their analysis of the 1997 parliamentary elections convincingly argued that family, tribal and regional ties, as well as belonging to a religious brotherhood, were vital (but did not suffice) for the understanding of political processes in contemporary Algeria.

Solidarities and loyalties resulting from such belonging had experienced a resurgence as of the late 1980s with the increase in insecurity – be it physical or economic – and testified to what ex-prime minister Hamrouche called ‘*la victoire du particularisme sur l’universalisme*’.⁹³ Indeed, the increasing inability of the state to provide for and protect its citizens forced Algerians to turn to sources other than the state for support and protection. One such source was the (new) Islamic charities and solidarity networks.⁹⁴ ‘Traditional’ social structures of protection also (re-)gained importance when the population fell victim to the violence of Islamist insurgents as well as to that of state actors, namely the security forces. In the early 2000s, it was common to find Algerian newspaper comments and articles lamenting that the main points of orientation of Algerians reflected in politics were the tribe, the clan, the village and the region.⁹⁵

To understand these social structures as outright ‘traditional’ or ‘primordial’ would, however, have been problematic because such a perspective risked precluding the possibility of mutation or even reinvention of such ties, as had, for instance, been the case with the *aârouch*. But solidarity resulting from kinship ties as well as from regional ties was, nevertheless, strongly reminiscent of Ibn Khaldun’s (1987) concept of *assabiya*: that is, of a primordial (tribal) form of solidarity that resulted from blood ties linked to a common (remembered or invented) ancestor. As Hachemaoui (2003: 52) convincingly showed, *assabiya* resurfaced in Algeria, even if it was under the guise of other concepts or terms, such as *nasab* (descent). One characteristic of *assabiya* particularly important in contemporary Algeria was that they had a ‘lifelong’ quality and in this differed from ties that developed in the context of the potentially quick-shifting and unstable (economic) networks discussed earlier. However, patron–client networks tended to be, at least partly, knitted around family or tribal relationships, regional and ethnic belonging or religious brotherhoods, and thus also incorporated and profited from *assabiya*. In fact, the kinship dimension in patron–client networks could be seen as a stabilizing factor and one that made such networks more sustainable.

A ‘modern’ form of *assabiya* in contemporary Algeria was reflected in the networks or ‘clans’ dating back to the revolution, the ‘Clan of Oujda’ having

been a prominent example. Alone, the use of the term 'clan', insinuating blood ties, bestowed the quality of *assabiya* on revolutionary 'camaraderie'. With revolutionaries dying out, their descendants could and did successfully try to make revolutionary legitimacy a hereditary asset, but whether they managed to reproduce the *assabiya* that had tied their fathers together was to be doubted. Grandsons and granddaughters of prominent revolutionaries did not appear to feel a special allegiance among themselves, even if they tended to be united by the common goal of profiting from the benefits that came with revolutionary legitimacy.

The impact of the various solidarities subsumed under *assabiyat* on elite corridors of action was manifold; kinship solidarity manifested itself differently from regional or ethnic solidarity but each of these solidarities entailed specific obligations and led to certain – often contradictory – political practices. A systematic and encompassing analysis of these solidarities and the resulting constraints, obligations and opportunities for politically relevant elites would be beyond the scope of this study, particularly in view of the fact that literature on such solidarities is extremely rare. Nevertheless, some of the more evident corollaries of the various solidarities – kin, region and religious brotherhood – for elite corridors of action will be highlighted.

Example 1: Kinship solidarity

As Addi (1999: 12–26) documented, socio-economic developments after Algerian independence – for instance, rapid urbanization and lack of housing – altered relationships within the basic kinship unit, the (extended) family. Solidarity with one's (close) kin, however, appeared to remain an important factor for elite and non-elite choices. As Rouadjia (1994: 261) underlined, *ben'amisme* – coming from the word for cousin and implying advancement through *piston* (literally: 'good relationships', in content an equivalent of the Arabic *wasta*) – was widespread in Algerian society. One implication of this was that politically relevant elites were continuously expected to do their elite and non-elite family members favours, and did so because it was the 'social obligation'.⁹⁶ This could lead to what appeared, at least to the outsider, like conflicting interests. Young politically relevant elites in particular could also face the problem that their convictions and agendas – for instance, the struggle for a completely secularized state – were expected to meet opposition from older family members, and as a result these young elites began hiding aspects of their political agenda at home as well as in public.⁹⁷ Values dear to one's kin – even if they differed from one's own – thus also served to structure elite corridors of action.

Yet to present reform-oriented political elites as victims of the multiple demands primarily made on them by their kin would be strongly misleading. For kinship ties also implied deals from which both sides profited. Politically relevant elites used their kin to strengthen their position in patronage networks and to enhance their power base. The earlier portrayed consultant

A.L., for instance, had in his own words ‘managed to place’ one of his brothers in the position of adviser to the current wonder boy of the Algerian economy, Rafik Khalifa. A.L.’s wife ‘was placed’ in the empire of Issad Rebrab, one of Algeria’s biggest industrialists. In his usual frank way, A.L. called these actions ‘creating a position for myself in the networks of these people’.⁹⁸ An excellent example for someone using his kin as intermediaries both in political as well as in economic dealings was President Bouteflika. Several of his siblings worked with him at the presidency, the most prominent of them being his younger brother Said.⁹⁹

Tribal solidarity had historically always been a key for understanding Maghrebi politics (as well as those in other Arab countries), as Ibn Khaldun established in the fourteenth century and as Gellner (1995) and Waterbury (1970) argued in the second half of the twentieth century. In Algeria, even colonization with forced displacements, a revolution and a state-building period that tried to ‘modernize’ society by promoting urbanization, among other things, had not managed to completely efface tribal solidarity.¹⁰⁰ In 2004, an Algerian ambassador illustrated this beautifully in a letter to the president in which he accused the latter of humiliating him in front of his tribe.¹⁰¹ Tribal ties again expressed themselves in terms of both duties and opportunities for politically relevant elites. Coming from a large and powerful tribe raised one’s chances of becoming politically relevant; being an important tribal elder in addition raised one’s negotiating power, as the earlier described example of Benflis negotiating over votes with tribal leaders demonstrated. National political elites in election times could not afford to ignore tribal chiefs and Algerian newspapers even kept track of which party most successfully courted such chiefs in the various provinces in which tribal structures appeared to be particularly strong.¹⁰² One third-generation elite interviewed, who was the youngest member of the FLN’s Bureau Politique in 2002, when asked why he had been recruited rather than someone else, mentioned three points: that he came from ‘*une grande tribu du Ouest*’, that he sat in the UGTA’s executive, and that he was young.¹⁰³ Belonging to a large tribe clearly was an asset because it signalled the potential for electoral mobilization. Co-opting one single person into a powerful position could secure the loyalty of thousands of people who were attached to this person.

Tribal solidarity obviously also had a price tag attached for elites drawing on it in contemporary Algeria. Loyalty and solidarity coming from tribal ties were based on notions of reciprocity and on expectations regarding the distribution of goods or favours just as much as loyalty and solidarity that stemmed from other ties. Hachemaoui (2003: 51ff.) beautifully demonstrated how in the *wilaya* of Djelfa, Z., a young inspector of the public treasury, got the RND list’s number two spot in 1997 mainly because he came from a large and important tribe. Z. was expected to mobilize his tribe by presenting himself as the ‘the son of the tribe’. The deal Z. made with his tribal supporters in return for their votes was the promise of captation of

government services for the profit of his 'brothers and cousins'. By negotiating their support for someone from their tribe the '*oueled al q'bila*' (sons of the tribe) had nothing to lose and much to gain. Hachemaoui (ibid.) concluded that Z. functioned as the clientelist 'switchboard', intermediary and interface between the tribe and state authorities. The effect of tribal solidarity on elite corridors of action thus was that – similar to earlier described effects of economic networks – it rendered elites' political convictions secondary and substituted political programmes with 'wheeling and dealing' and with chasing after (state) resources to distribute.

Example 2: Regionalism

The revolutionaries-turned-leaders of independent Algeria tended to strongly nourish regional sentiments despite their nationalist rhetoric. If these revolutionaries initially surrounded themselves with comrades who had fought in the same *wilaya* or on the same border (for example, in the Moroccan town of Oujda), they soon began to promote people coming from their geographic region of origin. Roberts (1983: 110) pointed out that Algeria was formally unified under Ottoman rule in administrative terms but that economic and cultural links between eastern and western Algeria had remained very weak even after economic integration was initiated by French colonial rule. After independence, strong rivalries developed between the east and the west. The acronym BTS, for Batna, Tebessa, Souk-Ahras, three provinces in the east and south-east of Algeria, was soon familiar to most Algerian ears. It alluded to the fact that in the times of Boumedienne (1965–78) and particularly in those of Chadli (1979–92) and Zeroual (1994–9), elites from the east of the country had monopolized key positions in the army as well as in the civil state apparatus.¹⁰⁴ With the ascendance of Bouteflika the acronym BTS could be replaced with the acronym TNM, for Tlemcen, Nedroma, Maghnia – three cities in the far west of Algeria, close to the Moroccan border. Most of the collaborators of the new president and his powerful ally Larbi Belkheir came from these cities.

According to insiders, in the early 2000s the army was the only state institution in which regionalism was ebbing away¹⁰⁵ – such claims, however, were difficult to verify. In the civil administration, as Rouadjia (1994: 278) has pointed out, efforts were made by prime decision-makers from independence to the 1990s to recruit top cadres from all regions. However, these top cadres in turn surrounded themselves with members from their family, tribe or region. Regionalist sentiment served as a compass for those recruiting as well as those recruited. One second-generation elite who had belonged to the FLN's central committee until the late 1990s and who occupied several top administrative posts in the education field, even though he never got his high school diploma and came from a modest Arabophone background, explained every single one of his recruitment steps with being a 'Jijeli' and 'meeting a Jijeli' who hired him.¹⁰⁶ Jijelis in top positions helped him even if

they did not know him or his direct family prior to hiring him. The explanation given by this elite for such recruitment practices was that common regional belonging was seen to guarantee a high degree of loyalty to the recruiter. If the recruited person did not perform to the liking of the recruiter, the latter would always find ways to impose social or economic sanctions on the person recruited or his family by activating regional ties, be they familial, tribal or economic. Such sanctions were only possible if the 'recruit' came from a region into which the influence of the recruiter reached. One signal sent by such practices to aspiring elites was that merit was secondary to regional (and other) belongings.

In politics, regionalist sentiment was a factor that fulfilled various functions. It served elites with national aspirations to unite a segmented local or regional society by evoking an '*açabiyya khūbra*' (Hachemaoui 2003: 51), a superior *assabiya*, that of the region.¹⁰⁷ Tapping into regionalist sentiments in contemporary Algeria was clearly an effort to expand kinship solidarity and loyalties to a larger group of individuals. Regionalism was an issue in the 2004 presidential election campaign, both in the media and on the ground, and it became one of the prisms through which rationality and irrationality of political choices and developments were viewed and explained. The candidates Benflis and Bouteflika were suddenly viewed as 'the candidate of the east' and 'the candidate of the west'. Support by core and other elites for the respective candidates was interpreted strongly along those lines.¹⁰⁸

Clearly, regionalism as tribalism was only one of several often competing keys on which elites could play. Bouteflika's election strategy in 2004 for conquering Batna, the geographic fief of his main rival Benflis, was to counter regionalist sentiment with revolutionary legitimacy. When Bouteflika visited Batna in the Aurès Mountains, where the war against French colonial rule had started in November 1954, 'BTS stood against November 1954'.¹⁰⁹ The outcome of the elections – Bouteflika strongly prevailed in the *wilaya* of Batna – signalled that BTS in this case was defeated, whether by historic legitimacy, by the president's first term record (namely the enormous improvements in the security situation) or by election manipulation was impossible to determine. Only in Benflis' home district did regionalism apparently play a role; there Benflis led with 78.53 per cent of the vote. Similar to all earlier mentioned attachments, regionalism alone could not serve to explain political choices, but it was one important element shaping elite corridors of action and hence individual elite decision-making. Moreover, cutting across political agendas, it also contributed to preventing the emergence of effective nationwide political parties.

Example 3: Religious brotherhoods

The *zaouïas* resurfaced as political actors in the late 1980s after having been stigmatized for decades due to their (partial) collaboration with the colonial

authorities.¹¹⁰ The main reason for their rehabilitation and growing political weight was that they were (re-)discovered by decision-makers as a potential counter-weight and counter-weapon to Islamism. They incorporated mystical elements and rituals that had been declared 'archaic', 'backward' and 'obscurantist' by nineteenth- and twentieth-century Islamic reform movements (Colonna and Colonna 1991: 142), and that continued to be abhorred by contemporary Islamists.¹¹¹ What further set apart the brotherhoods from Islamism was that religious instruction at the *zaouïas* was profoundly apolitical. The *zaouïas* were thus an ideal tool for core and second circle elites to propagate their counter-version to 'imported' Islam.¹¹² They were profoundly apolitical and opposed to violence; they were primarily a source for spiritual instruction and a moral anchor, and their sheikhs (spiritual leaders) were widely seen as moral authorities. At the same time they were highly attractive to politicians, for as one Algerian observer put it: 'On the one hand, it is a very weighty electorate, on the other hand we are facing voters who do not ask accountability of those elected. They vote, they disappear and continue to turn their back to this world dirtied by politicians.'¹¹³ Such readings, insinuating that those affiliated with a *zaouïa* voted as their sheikh told them without expecting anything in return, however, tended to be too blue-eyed. Even if the role of *zaouïas* in politics was among the most under-researched topics of contemporary Algeria, it was evident that the *zaouïas*, and in particular their sheikhs, too, were part of 'reciprocity webs'.

Leaders of *zaouïas* were being courted by decision-makers – in some cases they were virtually begged to stand in elections¹¹⁴ – and they profited from the official and unofficial attribution of funds or contracts. According to media reports, emissaries of Bouteflika negotiated with such sheikhs over the allocation of funds and privileges in return for mobilizing their followers to vote for the incumbent president.¹¹⁵ Bouteflika's good rapport with the brotherhoods had also a regionalist component: the *zaouïas* were anchored more strongly in the region the president came from, Algeria's west, mainly but not only because they had been marginalized in the east of the country by the more orthodox religious movement of the Oulémas which had strongly monopolized the 'religious camp' during the long struggle for independence. The issue of the *zaouïas*, moreover, also had a tribal component. It was not uncommon that membership in *zaouïas* overlapped with tribal belonging (Hajd Ali 1992: 65), and it appeared that the earlier discussed deals in the tribal context were also extended to include brotherhoods.

Brotherhoods also played a role in recruitment since the presidency of Chadli Bendjedid, whose wife came from the west of the country and belonged to the *zaouïa* of Mazouna.¹¹⁶ Due to the lack of data, however, it was impossible to assess how strong solidarities coming from belonging to a brotherhood were, especially compared to other ties, such as revolutionary or regional ones. It appeared that belonging to a *zaouïa* was (still) not something elites flaunted; though when asked, many of the elites interviewed said

that they or their family belonged to a *zaouïa*. The impact of the *zaouïas* on elite corridors of action showed similarities to those of earlier discussed ties. Politically relevant elites and those aspiring to such relevance could not afford to ignore the leaders of the largest brotherhoods. But since these brotherhoods had no direct interest in strategic issues, negotiations with their leaders were not about political platforms, but consisted of a give and take involving funds and favours in exchange for loyalty and votes. A result of this for elite choices was that developing and defending political platforms was a futile luxury compared to the ability to negotiate deals – the latter constituting the essence of political relevance.

2.4 International ties

Of the many factors that affected elite corridors of action, international ones appeared to be the most unpredictable for Algerian elites and those which required the quickest adaptation. International embeddedness was highest among core and second circle elites, and the nature of such embeddedness included a large spectrum of ties. On the one hand, there were ‘collective ties’ between Algeria and foreign countries – be it through insertion into the world economy; through international treaties; through a dominant new paradigm shaping international politics such as the ‘war on terrorism’; or through a more vague ‘international climate’ created by non-governmental international and transnational movements that influenced unofficial as well as official ties between countries and their elites. On the other hand, individual Algerian elites could be embedded in international business networks and/or have personal ties to other countries’ political leaders. International embeddedness, whether individual or collective, presented both opportunities and constraints for Algerian elites and could enlarge or narrow elite corridors of action.

International treaties were a potentially double-edged sword for the Algerian PRE. They obliged the governing elite – at least on paper – to certain rules of conduct, but at the same time enhanced international legitimacy of their rule. The association agreement with the EU¹¹⁷ that was finalized in late 2001 and to finally be implemented in 2005, for instance, required the dismantling of tariffs and a plethora of other economic measures that would, ideally, lead to more economic transparency, accountability and competition – developments that were likely to run counter to activities and interests of many members of the PRE. Also, it included an article that demanded respect for the principles of democracy and fundamental human rights – a sensitive domain for Algeria’s governing elites. At the same time, the signing of the agreement was a triumph for core and second circle elites, for it signalled the end of a decade of troubled international relations and implicitly rehabilitated the incumbent governing elite. Moreover, a similar agreement had been signed with Tunisia in 1995, but its implementation had been selective – the Tunisian president Ben Ali was, for

instance, never seriously reprimanded by the EU member states for his obvious overstepping of human rights.¹¹⁸ Hence, Algerian core and second circle elites could view the agreement as presenting more opportunities than constraints for them. Similarly, the inclusion of Algeria in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue required some (minor) adjustments to the ways in which the Algerian army communicated with and presented itself to the outside world. Yet the fact that the Algerian generals were greeted with open arms by NATO officials at a time when books tainting their image were published abroad and they had to fear prosecution in France was again a triumph for the Algerian core elite.¹¹⁹

An international development that seemed to work exclusively in favour of Algeria's governing elite was the events of 9/11 and the ensuing 'war on terror'. Algeria's ability to present itself as an early victim of international terrorism¹²⁰ and to show itself as a staunch ally of the US and of Europe in fighting terrorism – both US President Bush and French President Chirac repeatedly and publicly highlighted the central role Algeria played in this fight¹²¹ – virtually erased the bloody events of the 1990s and internationally rehabilitated the core elite despite its highly questionable policies and practices during the civil war. The impact of 9/11 more than counter-balanced the effect of publications by ex-army officers and of campaigns by international human rights organizations that in the late 1990s and early 2000s threatened to seriously damage the international standing of (ex-)core elite members such as Khaled Nezzar or Larbi Belkheir.¹²² Yet the psychological effect of the anti-regime campaigns was not to be underestimated. Taleb Ibrahim, a contender as well as an ex-core elite member, argued that one article critical of the regime in *Le Monde* had more impact on core elite decisions than the entire Kabyle uprising.¹²³ A senior French diplomat even went so far as to say that the French judge who dismissed Nezzar's defamation charges against ex-army officer Souaidia 'has done more for Algerian democracy than anyone else in the past years'.¹²⁴

What also affected elite corridors of action, albeit almost exclusively in the sense that it enhanced the governing elites range of manoeuvre, was the fact that the US and France – and to a lesser extent Spain, Great Britain and other European and non-European countries – were increasingly competing over political and economic influence in Algeria.¹²⁵ With the limited opening of the hydrocarbon sector to foreign investors in 1991, foreign investments and foreign bids for exploration rights steadily increased.¹²⁶ This put Algerian elites in an excellent position, not only to play off potential investors from different countries against each other, but to engage in questionable internal practices without having to fear reprimands. The increasing repression of the private press hostile to President Bouteflika and his entourage, the disqualification of presidential candidates on questionable grounds and the instrumentalization of justice in favour of the president did not provoke (public) comments by foreign officials.¹²⁷ After Bouteflika's election victory, the US and France hastened to congratulate the president

and to stress the important democratic progress made by the 2004 presidential elections before even awaiting the final verdict on the elections by the few international observers present or by the Algerian constitutional court. Algeria's governing elite clearly had much leeway, as long as it co-operated in the war on terror and as long it had resources to which international companies sought to gain access – being one of Europe's three top providers of natural gas handed Algerian elites a trump card *vis-à-vis* foreign governments and potential foreign pressure.

The wealth in natural resources also had a downside for the governing elites, however. With Algeria's economy being built primarily around one pillar, the hydrocarbon sector, and with the political allocation of the hydrocarbon rent being a key factor for the successful management of instability, the medium and long-term fate of the country's governing elite was tied strongly to the volatile world oil price, which Algerian elites could barely influence. Oil rent contraction meant, among other things, that the governing elites had to search for alternative strategies to uphold and legitimize their rule. In the late 1980s this had been one factor leading to political and economic liberalization. In the early 1990s it propelled the Algerian elite to turn to foreign donors and the IMF for credits, and throughout the 1990s it meant portraying oneself as saving the country from impending 'Islamist theocracy'.

A further factor affecting elite corridors of action was the embeddedness of individual elites in binational or transnational economic networks. Hadjadj (2001) and Mehri (2003) traced a number of such networks. The Algerian press, moreover, continuously produced small puzzle pieces on the international business dealings of Algerian elites, whereby much of the information given was based on rumours. In 2003, *Le Matin* ran a series of columns – written under a pseudonym and titled 'The Godfathers of Sonatrach' – in which business ties and alleged questionable practices were exposed that involved close co-operators of Bouteflika, a joint venture between Sonatrach and a company from the Halliburton Group, and a few smaller Algerian companies.¹²⁸ Some of the paper's claims were completely absurd – for instance, allegations that Bouteflika promised the CIA that he would 'hand over Sonatrach to the Americans'¹²⁹ – and could be seen as a campaign by foes of the president in the army and/or the business world. Yet the more detailed allegations regarding opaque practices and exchanges of favours¹³⁰ – even if they were only partly true – seemed to confirm patterns described by Hadjadj (2001: 179–94) in his research on (ex-)core and other elites' involvement in international economic networks that operated on the border between the legal and illegal. The deep and direct involvement of many politically relevant elites in economic activities in the Bouteflika era – whether these were legal or not – could explain the hesitance of the governing elite to push economic, judicial and administrative reforms. The fact that many economic networks also involved foreign interests could be seen as an asset for Algerian elites because it eased foreign pressure on

Algeria to fight corruption and push certain reforms. As one foreign executive in a Sonatrach joint venture put it: 'We know that everyone steals but our profit is much too good for us to make a fuss about it.'¹³¹

While core and second circle elites in the Bouteflika era were highly internationally embedded, third circle elites generally had fewer international ties. Contesting elites such as independent union or opposition party cadres who fell into the category of radical democrats could receive some support from European parties – the FFS, for instance, belonged to the socialist international – could be invited to workshops of the US National Democracy Institute or to conferences abroad, or could receive the visit of a US under-secretary of state for human rights.¹³² How this influenced their corridors of action was difficult to assess, all the more as most of these ties were established in the early 2000s only. Since these ties were primarily based on the procurement and exchange of knowledge, they could be expected to have an impact on elite strategies in the long run. But there were no indications that these ties provided contesting elites with any immediate and strong foreign backing that directly translated into political behaviour or that widened the range of manoeuvre of these elites. The Kabyle *coordinations* may have profited from favourable opportunity structures that included international press coverage and attention during a certain period, but the clear overall tendency during Bouteflika's first term was that international embeddedness primarily widened the range of manoeuvre of core and second circle elites.

3 Conclusion

The analysis of elite corridors of action showed that considerations, interests and strategies of elites were dominated by factors other than political outlooks and agendas. This was true of all elite types, albeit to varying extents. A first cluster of factors affecting elite corridors of action belonged to the symbolic realm. It included notions of leadership and authority that were rooted in 'traditional' forms of social organization and that were based on cultural concepts such as honour and resulted in political organizational structures hampering competition and full participation. Dominant perceptions of politics, moreover, reflected a deeply rooted historic belief among elites and non-elites in rebellion and violence as the main catalyst for political change rather than negotiations and processes within formal political institutions. A further factor influencing elite corridors of action was a widespread popular notion – shared by governing elites – that politics were being made 'elsewhere', whereby this elsewhere was referring less to a concrete actor than to an elusive system of informal negotiations and decision-making. The combination of these factors resulted in political practices that oscillated between verbal rebellion, practical submissiveness or inertia and delegation of responsibility.

A second cluster of factors affecting elite corridors of action had to do with the fact that politically relevant elites were embedded in a variety of

overlapping social and economic structures that directed their interests, strategies and choices. These structures included kinship ties as well as economic and regional networks, and they were strongly based on reciprocal obligations and on social and economic sanctions in case of non-compliance. Solidarities linked to these structures cut across the entire political spectrum and proved stronger than adherence to a political programme. What literally ‘oiled’ these structures was the rentier nature of the economy because it allowed for nurturing and facilitating the distributive practices. Finally, international embeddedness – ranging from international treaties to the war on terror and to transnational economic networks – resulted in both opportunities and constraints for Algeria’s governing elite, although opportunities prevailed in the Bouteflika era. The potential problem confronted by politically relevant elites was that the empowering force coming from their embeddedness was in permanent danger of vanishing if they could no longer fulfil the obligations linked to their embeddedness.

Obviously the different overlapping ties did not have a single coherent effect on elite corridors of action. On the contrary, because of their multiple embeddedness individual elites had to find ways to make best use of opportunities coming with certain ties, while at the same time satisfying the multiple and even mutually exclusive expectations and obligations resulting from the very same as well as from other ties. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of the multiple embeddedness on elite corridors of action was that a majority of elites had every interest in working to preserve the political, social and economic status quo if they wanted to remain politically relevant. Indeed, implementation of most reforms advocated by reform-oriented elites would have undermined the very mechanisms that produced their elite status. Even contesting actors who would have gained from political and economic change and struggled for such change could not afford to completely ignore the rules of the game – be it dominant perceptions of desirable political practices or the permanent negotiating over the exchange of goods and favours – if they wanted to become or remain politically relevant.

With the Algerian system functioning primarily through highly informal, personalized and competing vertical networks, the emergence of a nationwide contesting party with an agenda that could bridge the many vertical cleavages – as had been the case with the FIS for a short period in the late 1980s and early 1990s – was not possible in the early 2000s. The social and economic transformations brought about by a decade of civil war and of economic liberalization had strengthened the different vertical ties of elites as well as non-elites and hindered the emergence of powerful ‘horizontal’ (class) structures.

Yet, despite their strong respective dynamics, the many competing vertical networks did not threaten the stability of the system. On the contrary, they supported the successful management of instability. They fragmented the elite while at the same time binding elite members to certain rules of the

game. They prevented the emergence of a 'horizontal' consciousness and ensuing broad contestation, and proved unsusceptible to the control by any one political force – contesting or aligned with the regime. These ties and their effects on Algerian political practices signalled – more than anything else – that the Algerian system had developed self-perpetuating dynamics.

VII Conclusion

Prospects for change

Political developments in Algeria since the mid to late 1990s may have not led down the path to democracy, but they presented a remarkable success story in the management of instability. The governing elite displayed a notable aptitude for adapting its strategies to the many challenges posed by an unstable international and domestic environment. It embarked on a limited political and economic liberalization process without undermining the very foundations of the existing system, and it managed to substitute or compensate for its lack of democratic legitimacy – at least to a certain degree – with historic legitimacy, distributive practices and by casting itself in the role of the *savoir* of the republic against the ‘Islamist theocratic’ and ‘terrorist’ threat. The success of the elite in upholding the existing order was in part due to specific international political and economic conjunctures. The events of 9/11 and the ensuing ‘war on terror’ proved a prime opportunity for core elites to internationally redeem themselves after a decade of (limited) isolation. Oil price hikes had a stabilizing effect in that they allowed core and second circle elites to uphold or even expand distributive networks. Moreover, external actors with political influence in Algeria, such as the United States and France – not least because of their interest in Algerian oil and gas – opted for continuity and support of the incumbent core elite and showed little willingness to push Algeria towards a renewed democratization process with an uncertain outcome.

Yet it would be misleading to portray Algeria at the end of Bouteflika’s first term as solidly authoritarian and stable. Algeria in the early 2000s was a country in which multiple political, economic, social and cultural dynamics of instability counterbalanced each other in such a way that it was possible to speak of a delicate ‘equilibrium of instability’ in a political system of liberalized and increasingly pluralist authoritarianism. Resistance to change was found not only among elites but was systemic, in that important social and economic dynamics tended to interact favourably with elite strategies and to support the political status quo. As a result, the transition costs – indicating the intensity and extent of resistance faced by those forces pushing for institutional change – were far too high for any profound system transformation to materialize, despite an apparently high and growing

number of reform-oriented elites. However, because of Algeria's situation being one of temporarily equilibrated instability, with the country becoming increasingly embedded internationally and system continuity highly dependent on world economic developments, system reform and possibly even system change could not be precluded in the long run.

This concluding chapter first reviews the factors and mechanisms that were responsible for high transition costs and thus prevented profound political change between 1995 and 2004. The focus then moves to various conjunctions of factors that could propel change, and whether such change would necessarily imply democratization.

1 The equilibrating dynamics of the Algerian system

Analysis of elite composition and elite dynamics showed that decision-making processes in Algeria from the late 1990s onward became increasingly pluralistic. More and more actors representing a broad political spectrum became politically relevant in that they participated in decision-making, even if 'only' by exercising enough temporary nuisance or veto power to extract concessions. Leaders of the Kabyle *coordinations* and business lobbies such as the Forum des Chefs d'Entreprise or leaders of moderate Islamist parties were but three examples of new actors belonging to the third circle of the elite who were able to move into the second circle – even if only temporarily and through specific political conjunctures. The growing number of politically relevant elites was the result of several factors. Core elite efforts to ease the multiple pressures they were faced with and to give their rule a more legitimate touch by broadening their power base had led to the recruitment of new and younger actors and of semi-contesters into the formal political system. Moreover, the interplay of specific national and international political and economic factors – the civil war, the globalization of justice, economic crisis and IMF induced economic liberalization, political liberalization and the uprising in Kabylia – had allowed new regime clients as well as contesting elites to emerge. Compared to the years right after the coup d'état, the core elite's range of manoeuvre had clearly been curtailed. Yet these developments did not produce any discernable democratization dynamics. Rather, they led to what Roberts qualified as '*immobilisme*' (2002a: 34).

1.1 The fragmentation of the political landscape

The reasons for the absence of significant political change lay not just in core elite strategies and intra-elite dynamics but were also found in the interaction between the elite and the larger social, cultural and economic context. The nature of the Algerian socio-cultural and economic structures – which the elites had partly shaped – facilitated successful core elite management of challenges. In other words: elite strategies tended to fall on fertile ground.

This was particularly evident in the case of one of the main handicaps for political change, the strong fragmentation if not atomization of the national political landscape that reflected itself in enormous factionalism and precluded broad alliances of challengers and the emergence of any strong contesting force in the decade after the FIS was dissolved. This fragmentation – running mainly but not exclusively along social, ethnic, regional and linguistic cleavages and secular-religious gaps – increased with the broadening of political participation and prevented potential system threatening dynamics from gathering much nationwide momentum. Two (potential) factors for instability – social and cultural heterogeneity on the one hand and the dynamics resulting from increasing pluralism on the other hand – thus not only reinforced but also counterbalanced each other.

The political fragmentation and factionalism was a result of a core elite *divide et impera* strategy that not only played on long-existing regional, ethnic, linguistic and other divides but was reinforced by these very cleavages and developed its own dynamics. This divide-and-rule strategy consisted of three pillars: repression, co-optation and the encouragement of what appeared to be competition. Newly emerging actors with a mobilizing capability such as the Kabyle protest movement as well as potentially threatening contesters with a long history, such as the FFS or the radical Islamists, were subjected to (extremely) repressive measures on the one hand and to co-optation efforts on the other hand. In the case of the FIS, the strategy was very successful in dividing and weakening the movement's leadership and in absorbing a part of the constituency into the political system via other co-opted and/or tolerated Islamist parties.

The encouragement and creation of parallel structures to weaken existing actors was the third pillar in the elite's divide-and-rule strategy. It could be argued, however, that such structures were not only part of a strategy but also the effect of core elite divisions that resonated with core elite clients and their respective organizations. In either case, the effect was a multiplication of (potentially) politically relevant actors, be they parties, political associations or newspapers. This created what appeared to be much or even excessive competition. Yet in most cases what looked like competition had little to do with competing political ideas and more to do with personal rivalries. The print media and its elites were a good example of the facts that the creation of parallel structures was an instrument for getting even with one's foe(s) and that 'excessive' competition weakened the impact of single actors. Similarly, the creation of the RND in 1997 by circles close to President Zeroual did not lead to more 'real' political competition – after all, the party came close to being a 'clone' of the FLN – but nevertheless had the effect of competition in that it temporarily decreased the FLN's representation in formal political institutions. Moreover, the political fragmentation in Kabylia after the emergence of the *coordinations* demonstrated how the appearance of a new political actor in an already fragmented political landscape could lead to the atomization of this landscape – with or without intervention by

the governing elites. Even just the notion that the '*pouvoir*' had created or could be trying to split the protest movement set self-fragmenting dynamics in motion. However, since those employing the divide-and-rule strategy were themselves becoming increasingly divided, this strategy promoted divisions and led to different sources of instability counter-balancing each other, but did not necessarily allow for easier ruling. Struggles among the governing elite in combination with the emergence of more and more actors with nuisance power – not least a product of the divide-and-rule strategy – limited the range of manoeuvre of prime decision-makers. Decision-making deadlocks over issues such as education sector reforms or privatization in the hydrocarbon sector testified to these limitations.

The dynamics of fragmentation, in the politically relevant elite as well as in the wider population, were a major factor raising potential transition costs. They undermined what transition theorists such as O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 38ff.), Przeworski (1991) and Burton *et al.* (1992: 17ff.) considered to be important prerequisites for democratization. They dimmed the prospects for an elite settlement or pacts in which the main political and social forces could have agreed to new and democratic rules of the game, and they hindered the rise of strong political parties that could have defended more than communitarian, personal or particularistic interests, or that could have reflected more than clientelist social and economic structures. Moreover, they prevented civil society groups from strongly emerging and presenting a force for democratization. This stunted development of civil society was crucial, for as Hawthorne (2004: 11) importantly concluded, for civil society to be an important actor in democratization processes it needs to develop a critical mass of organizations and movements that are not only autonomous and have a pro-democracy agenda but also have 'the ability to build coalitions with other sectors of civil society'. Finally, the vertical clientelistic structures that dominated the Algerian system prevented the emergence of a further possible motor for change: a strong 'horizontal' class-consciousness and resulting interests and political struggles.

1.2 The terms of recruitment

A second cluster of factors contributing to the containment of liberalization dynamics had to do with the ways new politically relevant actors were recruited into the system. In this case too, core elite strategies found a positive resonance in social, cultural and economic dynamics. The mechanisms of elite selection in contemporary Algeria prioritized criteria other than merit. Analysis of third-generation members of the PRE showed that young politically relevant actors emerging in the Bouteflika era in most cases came from social segments already present in the PRE; this was the case not only for those handpicked by the governing elites but was – with some notable exceptions – also true for those actors pushed into positions of political relevance 'from below': that is, by social forces.

Third-generation members of the PRE were – with few exceptions – *francisant* or *berberisant* and possessed either real or fictitious revolutionary legitimacy. The *Arabization* of the education system had acted as a mechanism of exclusion from the elite for most of those who did not come from (privileged) Francophone backgrounds. The selective conferring of historical legitimacy upon regime-supporting actors and the turning of this legitimacy into a hereditary quality functioned as a second mechanism of exclusion respectively inclusion. Most third-generation elites, moreover, had a background of ‘local notability’ – whether that they came from a large and influential tribe, or their family belonged to a religious brotherhood or had close ties to the *nomenklatura* and/or were locally eminent economic actors. This gave (potentially) emerging elites negotiating capital. To those recruiting them they could offer to mobilize votes based on solidarities and loyalty attributable to kinship relations, to regionalist or communitarian sentiment or to economic dependency. Since such solidarities and loyalties were strongly contingent on notions of reciprocity they in turn obliged politically relevant actors to continuously honour loyalty and (electoral) support with favours – be these posts, funds, services or contracts.

Overall, recruitment mechanisms into the elite and channels for upward mobility within the elite mirrored three important characteristics of the Algerian political system: first, the mainly vertical ties that had experienced a resurgence with increasing physical and economic insecurity as of the late 1980s, such as ties linked to family, tribal, ethnical or regional belonging, and modern revolutionary or rentier networks; second, the informal and personalized modes of negotiation and exchange found throughout Algerian society; and third, the high turnover of personnel particularly obvious among MPs and ministers that reflected core elite wheeling and dealing and pointed to the low importance attributed to political experience and strong and stable formal political institutions. The social and economic terms of recruitment again contributed to raising transition costs in that they institutionalized the informal functioning of formal political institutions ranging from parties to elected state institutions. Moreover, with elected politicians acting as clientelist intermediaries between the state and individuals or collective groups, the development of a sense of citizenship and of individual political responsibility in the wider population was impeded.

1.3 The economic and social matrix of politics

An important factor literally ‘oiling’ the informal but strongly institutionalized system of give and take among elites and between elites and parts of the wider population was the rentier nature of the Algerian system. The ability to distribute the oil rent was one of the main instruments of core elite power and system stability. Moreover, the rentier system had created a mentality that was favourable to all forms of economic exchanges – including those disguised as social interaction – but hostile to the emergence

of an economically productive class, a bourgeoisie or strong middle class independent of the 'state class'. The absence of such a class was also a factor raising transition costs. Furthermore, the economic activities of (ex-)officers of the military, of political functionaries and top civil and political administrators as of the late 1980s had continuously erased borders between the political, military, administrative and public and private economic spheres. Since political relevance strongly depended on the ability to distribute material and other goods, economic liberalization only intensified the scramble of elites and aspiring elites for access to rents – the privatization of import licenses was a case in point. In view of their deep embeddedness in the system, Algerian business elites had little interest in mobilizing against existing 'political' structures or actors – the destiny of Rafik Khalifa, whose empire quickly collapsed apparently after he lost the backing of Bouteflika because he was considered not loyal enough, was likely to act as a deterrent for other business elites.

As volatile and sensitive to economic and political changes as individual economic networks may have been, in their totality they nevertheless functioned as a stabilizing factor – not just because of oil price hikes throughout much of Bouteflika's first term (1999–2004) but also because of the diversity and quick adaptability of economic networks to changing (economic) contexts. The rentier nature of the Algerian system and the governing elite's control over the state's main and enormous resources also lowered the need and the chances for pacts, for these were most likely to come about if neither the authoritarian elites nor the opposition controlled resources (Merkel and Puhle 1999: 51). Furthermore, the army elite's involvement not 'just' in politics but in the economy and particularly in networks of rent distribution was unfavourable for the prospects of democratic transition. The example of countries like Bolivia showed that a high level of corruption and the fact that military power was not (formally) institutionalized made political alternation more difficult and improbable (Rouquié 1986: 132–3) for it was 'easier to demilitarize the governments than the centres of power' – in the Algerian case the hydrocarbon sector was such a centre. Hence, an army retreat from 'visible' political processes, as appeared to be the case in the 2004 presidential elections, constituted only a small step towards demilitarization of the Algerian system.

Obviously, the extent to which members of the Algerian PRE were embedded in economic and other networks varied greatly. Third circle elites tended to be less embedded economically than core and second circle elites, contesters less than clients of governing elites. But all politically relevant elites had certain particularistic ties – be they kinship, religious, regional or economic ones – from which opportunities, expectations and obligations resulted. Figures such as former Lebanese prime minister Rafik al-Hariri, former Polish presidential candidate Stanislaw Tyminski or former Estonian foreign minister Tom Ilves – men who had made their careers and their small or big fortunes outside their country and could at least initially operate

outside existing social and economic networks – did not exist in Algerian politics in the early 2000s. The formal political system from the local to the national level required that all those aspiring to more than temporary or very limited political relevance engage in negotiations that Hachemaoui (2003) so aptly termed '*le jeu social*' and that had little to do with political agendas. The inability to play this game with its strong economic dimension equalled political irrelevance in the medium and long run. One of Benflis' main handicaps in the 2004 elections was that Bouteflika had catapulted him out of a formal position that would have enabled him to fully live up to this game, which looked political but was in fact dominated by social and economic transactions and cultural notions of politics. The mode of functioning of the Algerian system automatically kept all those challengers at bay who were not able or willing to stick fully to the unwritten rules of this game.

Among the many implications of adhering to these rules was the regular circumvention of laws in order to fulfil obligations and live up to material expectations. While these elite practices were not the sole reason for 'the law not presenting a norm in Algeria', as the historian Daho Djerbal put it,¹ they undermined efforts – often by the very same elites that broke that law – to install the rule of law. The absence of the rule of law was again a formal institutional deficit that substantially raised transition costs. As Zakaria (1997: 22ff.) plausibly argued, the rule of law has been one important feature of 'constitutional liberalism' which in turn was an important element and to a certain extent a precondition of successful democratization in Western states.² Even if Western democratization trajectories are a problematic matrix for the Arab world, the absence of the rule of law and other aspects of constitutional liberalism, such as the (transparent) conferral of private property rights, clearly presented an obstacle to democratization in Algeria. The absence of a spirit of constitutional liberalism in fact presented one central difference to certain Latin American regimes that otherwise appeared to resemble the Algerian one in certain periods. Not only was the official and dominant ideology throughout Latin America liberal and democratic, but 'the normative and cultural context' was such that those who held military power knew that there existed 'above them a superior legitimacy, that of constitutional order' (Rouquié 1986: 110).

1.4 The socio-cultural basis of authoritarianism

A further factor impeding democratization in Algeria was specific socio-cultural perceptions of what constituted authority and leadership, of how politics were being practised and of how political success (or change) came about. Perceptions of authority and leadership – shared by elites and non-elites alike or catered to by elites – mirrored social values and modes of organization that could be described as authoritarian and/or patriarchal rather than as participatory, inclusive and egalitarian. This was reflected in the Kabyle *coordination's* drawing on and reinventing certain traditional

forms and values of Kabyle social organization that implied the exclusion of women as well as in patriarchal styles of rule within parties that espoused democratic agendas such as the FFS. Values borrowed from the socio-cultural realm were also important in the 2004 presidential campaign. For example, using force to obtain one's goals, such as repression of parts of the printed press, manipulation of the state media or tampering with the law, did not work to Bouteflika's disadvantage because he was appreciated for conveying an aura of power and strength, for being able to defend his honour (if required by demonstrations of force), for controlling resources and generously distributing them.

A further dominant perception of successful political practices that undermined potential democratization dynamics was the historically rooted credo that armed struggle and popular insurrection rather than negotiations would lead to political change – the war of liberation and the uprisings in 1988 that heralded the end of the single-party system were two examples deeply engraved in collective memory. The resulting '*maquis* as a track to success' mindset did not imply – at least not after a decade of violence – that political actors in the early 2000s took up arms. But it dimmed expectations of both political actors and the wider population of what negotiations could achieve. Similarly, non-elite perceptions that politics were made by an elusive *pouvoir* explained not only popular disillusionment with the formal political process and low voter turnout in elections, but also functioned as a valve for elected and non-elected political elites because they could delegate responsibility to a higher and ill-defined force called *le pouvoir*. Perceptions of what constituted desirable forms of leadership could be highly contradictory – for instance, idealizing collective leadership while at the same time expressing the longing for a single strong charismatic leader. Overall, however, political practices – both of elites and non-elites – tended to contrast with democratic aspirations voiced by parts of the politically relevant elite and the population. Quandt (2002: 15) may have correctly argued that a rising number of Algerian citizens aspired to a democratic future, but this desire appeared to co-exist with an authoritarian mindset or phenomenon – Camau and Geisser (2003) developed the pertinent term '*le syndrome autoritaire*' to describe a similar phenomenon in the Tunisian context. This mindset, which contributed to defining the rules of the political game, was clearly a further factor for exorbitant transition costs.

Religion – i.e. what was considered to be Islamic in popular discourse and 'officially' constructed to be so by the authorities – also played into the authoritarian and patriarchal as well as to the '*maquis* as a track to success' mindsets. It could, moreover, partially explain the tendency – both among elites and in the wider population – to delegate political responsibility to a 'higher force'. Yet it would have been simplistic to reduce Algerian perceptions of politics and resulting practices mostly or exclusively to their religious dimension. Patriarchal structures and concepts of honour were and are also found in southern Mediterranean European countries (Werenfels

2002b), and the notion of violence (only) leading to political change was rooted in collective historic experiences that were linked less to religion than to colonialism, political banditry and piracy, as Martinez (2000) pointed out. Nevertheless it is possible to argue that popular perceptions of what was Islamic and what was not did have an impact on the speed of political change in Algeria, in that they affected the speed of social change and impeded the spreading of certain (civic) values. Few political elites were ready to take decisions – namely the introduction of civic education in school curricula or the ending of legal discrimination against women – that could have been interpreted as not being ‘faithful to Islam’. At the same time, politically relevant elites falling into the category of Islamist reformer pushed for democratic reforms in the name of what was Islam for them. Islam could thus be seen as a factor which contributed on the one hand to raising transition costs and on the other hand – arguably to a lesser extent – to lowering them.

1.5 The ambivalence of potential actors for change

One important implication of the multiple unspoken social and economic rules and socio-cultural mindsets shaping political practices was that existing and strongly diverging political attitudes became secondary in political decision-making processes. This was particularly surprising in view of the strongly diverging or even diametrically opposed political values that different elites had and their diverging visions of the Algerian nation, its institutions and its identity. This study’s focus on third-generation members emerging within the PRE as of the second half of the 1990s showed five distinct elite types that could also be found in the older generations, though the balance of power between types differed depending on generational belonging. The neo-dinosaur preferred to uphold the status quo and even advocated turning the clock back to more authoritarian and less pluralist times. The neo-revolutionary, the radical democrat and the Islamist reformer all struggled for democratic reforms, even if they did so with different means and different visions of what a democracy implied and of the desirable social order. Finally, the nationalist reformer, the elite type best placed in the regime and with excellent chances of upward mobility, pushed for substantial structural reforms in the administration, the economy, the judiciary and the educational system, not least with the goal of minimizing demands for political system change.

Przeworski (1991: 80) argued that ‘each political force opts for the institutional framework that will best further its values, projects or interests’. In the case of members of the Algerian PRE, values became subordinated to the struggle for an institutional framework that could guarantee personal political or economic survival. A corollary of this was that there were few forces – either within the politically relevant elite or outside it – that unambivalently pushed democratic reforms or that were not entangled in practices

that in themselves presented obstacles to democratization. This meant that transition costs paradoxically were caused in part by those very forces that appeared to fight to overcome them. Nationalist reformers had little interest in democratic reforms but advocated economic and administrative reforms that could have presented an important aspect of or even prerequisite for democratization, such as steps towards establishing the rule of law. Yet few substantial economic or administrative reforms – be they privatization, decentralization or the independence of the judicial system – propagated by this elite type materialized in Bouteflika's first term, even though nationalist reformers were well placed within the system. The absence of such reforms could be explained partly by specific actors in the second and third circle of the PRE blocking the reforms and partly by factionalist intra-core elite conflict. But it was also to a large extent the result of a dilemma that paralyzed nationalist reformers: the economic and administrative reforms they deemed necessary to stabilize the country and their rule would have undermined the economic and social structures in which they were so deeply entangled and which allowed them to uphold their political elite status.

Hence, actors that according to their values and declared strategies appeared to fall into Przeworski's (1991: 66ff.) category of reformers *de facto* behaved like hardliners. Contesting elites – be they neo-revolutionaries or radical democrats – that adamantly struggled for democratization of the overall political system, and that in Przeworski's (1991: 69) transition terminology could be described as 'radicals' or 'moderates' in the opposition, also contributed to raise transition costs. They were either forced to or chose voluntarily to use authoritarian, patrimonial and/or patriarchal organizational structures as the formal political vehicles for their struggle. This meant that their practices too undermined the emergence of important prerequisites for democracy, be these new organizational structures, new modes of recruitment or a sense of participation and eventually citizenship. Finally, external actors ranging from state leaders to multilateral institutions and organizations had a primary interest in economic reform and in Algeria's stability and appeared to prefer the existing order to unpredictable democratization dynamics.

2 What prospects for what change?

It is difficult at the end of Bouteflika's first term to see where the forces could come from that would have the ability to overcome the overwhelming transition costs of democratization in the near future. But it is possible to identify factors that could destabilize the delicate equilibrium of instability. Several of the very factors that contributed to stabilizing the situation also have the potential to upset the political status quo and to force the elite to develop new strategies and modify the political system – the oil price is one such factor. A relatively new development, the institutionalization of external ties through treaties such as the EU association agreement, can also be

expected to develop long-term effects that could challenge certain economic rules of the existing political game. Moreover, socio-cultural perceptions of desirable political practices are by no means static but in flux and likely to be affected by the increasing foreign exposure of the wider Algerian population, mainly through satellite television and the internet. Finally, many of the domestic structural socio-cultural, economic and political problems that sent Algeria into the spiral of violence for more than a decade still exist. The issues at the heart of the insurrection in Kabylia in 2001 have been similar to and in some cases even identical with those that drove young Algerians into the streets in 1988: the unsolved question of national identity, high unemployment, mismanagement of public resources, and a popular sense that *la hogra* is the main element marking the relationship between the governing and the governed. Hence, the continuation and even the spread of popular insurrections is more likely than not. In early 2004, both before and after the presidential elections, hardly a week passed without – albeit small-scale – youth riots and destruction of state property in provinces that had been considered calm compared to Kabylia.

2.1 Economic factors

None of these potentially destabilizing factors is likely to bring about political change on its own, but the interaction among several of these factors could develop system-upsetting dynamics. They could, moreover, push nationalist reformers to embark on reforms towards wider participation and increased political competition for reasons of ‘self-interested strategic compliance’ (Przeworski 1991: 24), even if they have no normative commitments to democracy. The key to such developments appears to lie primarily in economic and international political developments. Though Algeria’s macro-economic situation looks rosy – growth rates in 2004 exceeded 5 per cent and foreign exchange reserves reached an all-time high – virtually the entire upswing can be reduced to oil price hikes and high foreign investment in the hydrocarbon sector. This means that the successful management of problems caused by the demographic pressure and leading to social discontent, such as the lack of jobs and housing and the water problem, depends almost exclusively on one sector and on rent allocation. With the demographic pressure increasing – official figures assume a population increase from 31 million in 2002 to around 45 million in 2025 – the rent is to become more rather than less important.

Hence, one possible scenario of destabilization would be a modified version of what happened in the late 1980s: a sharp and lasting collapse of the oil price would handicap the state’s ability to pacify potentially contesting groups, cause the overall socio-economic situation to deteriorate, increase social gaps, lead to a new wave of popular uprisings extending beyond one clearly defined region, and aggravate intra-elite conflicts over rent distribution. Factors such as the unsolved identity issue, including the

question of the role of religion in the state, of universalist versus particularist values in the education system, and of official languages, would, in such a situation, only fuel destabilization dynamics – for as Lowi (2004: 85) convincingly argued with respect to rentier economies:

when oil rents become important in an environment in which cleavages are deep and the ‘national question’ – who are we, and what do we want to achieve together? – is contested, political stability is sacrificed in periods of resource contraction and distribution crises.

Developments such as the sequence described could push reformers within the elite to make political concessions to contesters – even if only in order not to lose all power. Moreover, development of the non-hydrocarbon sectors would become inevitable – in the long run this could lead to the emergence of a productive class and/or to the broadening of a ‘middle class’ that would constitute not only a class in and of itself but also a class for itself with an interest in political reform. Finally, in such a situation higher domestic taxation to substitute for hydrocarbon revenues might over time substantially empower the national parliament, which in turn could enhance the interest of middle-income social segments in the legislature and in free and fair elections to it, as Roberts (2002a: 38) suggested.

Yet long-lasting low oil prices are an unlikely assumption to begin with, and the above-cited dynamics of fragmentation as well as the deep-seated popular trauma from a decade of violence are likely to keep the destabilizing dynamics of such a scenario in check. Moreover, even if governing elites, including the core elites, were to be replaced as a result of the multiple pressures arising in such a scenario, the rentier mentality and the country’s current social and economic structures would most likely reproduce the existing rules of the game and produce similar political elites and structures.

A second scenario of destabilizing dynamics could be a combination of ‘pressure from below’ with effects of economic adjustment induced by Algeria’s increasing international (economic) embeddedness. In this scenario economic reform and system stability would imply a trade-off. One basic assumption would again be a certain resource contraction and resulting socio-economic misery. This would increase the leverage of external actors to push for structural changes in the economy, in the civil administration and in the legal framework and system. After all, the introduction of real economic competition, the reduction of tariffs, the enhancement of legal security as well as transparency and accountability linked to the paradigm of good governance constitute central pillars of the association agreement with the EU and of the European Neighbourhood Policy – a new European strategy *vis-à-vis* its southern Mediterranean (as well as its eastern) neighbour countries launched in 2003 – and of World Bank programs aimed at economic institution-building. WTO membership would require similar structural reforms. If fully implemented, such reforms would undermine the

distributive elite networks that constitute one of the very foundations of the Algerian political system. At the same time, the elite would come under pressure from the wider population because the reduction of tariffs is likely to have negative social ramifications due to Algeria's lack of competitiveness on international markets in the short run.

Yet such a scenario again appears to be unlikely. The governing elites have in the past skilfully turned earlier reforms like liberalization of trade and privatization to their individual and collective advantage. Moreover, in times of resource contraction and resulting distribution problems in the mid-1990s the core elite managed to substitute waning hydrocarbon rents with credits from an international community worried about the country's stability. The 'Russian scenario' in which market liberalization created new oligarchs and strengthened incumbent political elites (Stiglitz 1999) is a more probable outcome of structural economic reform than a change of the rules of the Algerian political game. Also, with the hydrocarbon sector likely to remain lucrative for foreign actors, chances that these actors will twist the arms of Algeria's core elites and their clients to implement agreements precisely as written remain low in the short and medium run – even more so given that the Algerian core elite strongly co-operates in the 'war on terror' and shows little inclination to deviate from this line in the near future. Moreover, with terrorism persisting, even if to a very reduced extent on Algeria's territory, the governing elite can continue to draw some legitimacy from being able to provide security and to justify certain army involvement in politics. This is reminiscent of situations in various Latin American countries where 'the permanence of the threat, which justified the army's coming to power' presented a central obstacle to democratic transitions (Rouquié 1986: 131).

2.2 *External and internal factors beyond the economy*

Key to Algeria's political future in all scenarios imaginable is whether the military *décideurs* will completely retreat from politics, cede control of the (state) economy and allow for an independent executive and judiciary and for a strong legislature. It appears clear that such a retreat will only happen if the generals concerned receive solid guarantees regarding their exemption from future legal prosecution. Since such guarantees would need to come not only from the latter's clients in the governing elite but also from contesters such as the FFS and Islamist leaders close to the FIS, and would need to extend to the generals' economic activities, this did not seem a likely scenario in 2004 – though it could not be excluded. Trajectories of Latin American military regimes showed that the military was generally only ready to withdraw from power in the context of wide-ranging guarantees whereby the level of official violence presented a decisive variable and weakly repressive regimes enjoyed a far wider range of manoeuvre (Rouquié 1986: 121–31). The multiple efforts of Algeria's generals to whitewash their image internationally could thus also be seen as a long-term investment in a calm

political retreat free from the 'hassles' Pinochet and similar figures experienced after they were dethroned.

Obviously there are more potential external and internal factors than the ones mentioned in the above scenarios that could upset the equilibrating dynamics of the Algerian political system and play a role in determining its future character. Intra-elite conflict is such a factor. The most influential generals appear to strongly disagree among themselves on specific political issues and to be involved in competing economic networks. Yet it is to be doubted whether these conflicts will get completely out of hand so long as the issue of guarantees is not solved because these generals share the same external threats. Though conflicts between some generals and the president are likely to continue in Bouteflika's second term, it appears to be neither in his nor in the generals' interest to let these conflicts escalate too much. Bouteflika, who did not play a role in the violence against Islamists in the 1990s, is in an excellent position to mobilize national and international public opinion as well as international justice against the generals; the generals in turn hold the trump card of commanding troops and the widely feared intelligence services which they could use against the president and his entourage. Intra-elite struggles could, however, become threatening to incumbent elites and the existing political order if what Przeworski (1986: 51–2) called a 'preferable alternative to the existing system' could constitute itself. In such a situation, the legitimacy deficit of incumbent elites would increase, particularly in view of the ebbing away of terrorism in Algeria. But with the strong dynamics of fragmentation it appeared unlikely that such an alternative could emerge in the near or mid-term future.

A further internal development with a potential effect on system stability is the fact that the revolutionary generation is not only abdicating politics but that revolutionaries are slowly dying out. It is far from certain that new elite generations will be able to uphold a fictitious revolutionary legitimacy and turn it to their advantage in the long run. Forty years after independence, the Algerian youth outside the elite appears not only increasingly uninterested in the revolutionary past but questions the very sense of the revolution, as taboo-breaking statements in the Algerian newspaper *Liberté* in 2002 showed.³ The falling away of revolutionary legitimacy as a criteria for elite status would put an end to the system of privileges surrounding this legitimacy and would open the door for social segments hitherto under-represented in the political relevant elite. It would, moreover, require that the governing elite find other means to legitimize its rule. A second potential domestic development with possibly unsettling effects would be the return of a part of the Algerian diaspora which in France alone counted close to half a million Algerians, not including those Algerians who had acquired French citizenship. Many of these Algerian emigrants had lived outside their country for decades, were well educated and had experience with democratic political systems. With the security situation improving and the macro-economic situation looking good, a number of these emigrants could be

expected to return in the near future. If this were indeed to be the case, the decisive question would be whether they would get involved in business primarily or whether they would also develop an interest in entering politics, and if so, whether they would be able to resist the potential privileges from playing the existing game and instead opt for changing the rules of this game.

Finally, Algeria is not insulated from shockwaves resulting from international developments and their dynamics. The events of 9/11 have proven to be system stabilizing, and the toppling of the Iraqi regime by a United States-led coalition, termed by Perthes a 'geopolitical revolution' in the Middle East,⁴ at least initially appeared to have potentially destabilizing effects. Right after the war in Iraq, the Algerian government mouthpiece *El Moudjahid* concluded that in order to 'arm' itself against external intervention, Algeria could not eternally postpone democratic reforms.⁵ One year later, however, no such reforms have been initiated and there is no discernable foreign pressure to do so.

Potential political uproar in countries directly bordering Algeria – whether the collapse of states in the Sahel zone to Algeria's south or Islamist or other insurgencies in Libya, Morocco or Tunisia – would certainly have an impact on elite strategies in Algeria. Most likely such developments would serve to justify more repressive measures. Though the implications of a potential renewed tightening of the 'authoritarian screw' belong to the realm of speculation, it can be assumed that popular response would be rebellion rather than silence. The Algerian population that as of the mid-1990s was experiencing a second wave of – even though only partial – liberalization is unlikely to accept a return to a substantially more authoritarian rule without contestation.

Few destabilizing repercussions are to be expected from the conflict closest to home, the issue of Sahraoui independence. Though this issue in conjuncture with unsolved border questions has clouded relationships with Morocco for more than three decades, it never developed regime-unsettling dynamics and is unlikely to do so in the future. Similarly, developments in the Union Maghreb Arabe, the still largely fictitious organization for regional co-operation, has little impact on political systems in these countries since their leaders share the interest of upholding their respective rule. Finally, further escalation of the Middle East conflict would affect popular sentiment, particularly among Arabophone Algerians, but is unlikely to have a strong impact on the course of political developments in a state and a society that have just come out of a civil war and that are still struggling to cope with this war's effects.

2.3 Fine-tuning of authoritarianism or democratization?

Even if the many potentially destabilizing forces indicate that the Algerian system could again be shaken to its foundations in the medium or long run, it remains doubtful that the outcome will be new and democratic rules of

the game, given the structures of the system and balance of power of the different political forces. As Ottaway (2003: 248) convincingly concluded on the basis of a wide range of country studies, perspectives for democratization of semi-authoritarian regimes were best if they were driven by internal forces. The above scenarios for potential (conjunctions of) factors of change in Algeria, however, show that most triggers for change could be expected to come from external (economic) forces. Obviously, the question of democratization in Algeria requires thinking in a long-term time frame. Rustow (1970: 347) correctly argued that one generation probably was the minimum period of transition because democracy involved 'the emergence of new social groups and the formation of new habits'. At the same time, experiences with democratization in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Southeastern Europe have questioned the very notion of democracy being the necessary outcome of transitions from authoritarianism. These transitions have tended to produce regimes that have been classified as 'semi-authoritarian' (Ottaway 2003), 'competitive authoritarianism' (Levitsky and Way 2002), 'liberalized autocracies' (Brumberg and Diamond 2003), 'hybrid' (Diamond 2002), 'defect democracies' (Merkel and Croissant 2000), 'delegative democracy' (O'Donnell 1994) or 'illiberal democracies' (Zakaria 1997) – to name but some of the many subcategories found in the literature on democratization. The plethora of terms reflects efforts to do justice to the diversity of regimes emerging after liberalization. Yet these terms describe very similar phenomena. They pertain to regimes that appear to have found a 'third way' between full autocracy and liberal democracy, that have proven excellent adapters to new situations and that may allow for elite changes and system reform, but that have been resilient to changes of certain basic rules of the political game – clientelism being but one example of such a rule.

Algeria in 2004 also belonged to those regimes whose political future was uncertain, but would not necessarily be democratic. One could even argue that the 'full package of Western democracy' was not what Algeria needed most urgently in the Bouteflika era but that certain components of democracy, such as the rule of law, good governance or respect for human rights, were issues more important for the wider population as well as for the successful tackling of socio-economic problems. The Algerian political system may indeed over time gradually incorporate more and more of Dahl's (1971: 3) institutional guarantees for a democracy, notably free and fair elections, freedom to form and join organizations, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, and representative institutions for making government policies. Moreover, participation, contestation and competition, key dimensions of democracy (*ibid.*), may increase. Yet the specific *mélange* of economic, social and cultural structures upon which the Algerian political system is built, and which interact with intra-elite dynamics, elite strategies and foreign interests, is likely to uphold informal (micro-)structures that continue to undermine full participation, free contestation and broad enforcement of the rule of law. Quandt's (1998: 164)

suggestion that Algeria may be faster than many of the region's other countries in reaching accountable and representative government may have been overly optimistic. Algeria is just as likely to again puzzle observers by maintaining the delicate equilibrium of instability not only in the short but in the medium or even long run. The longer the different potentially destabilizing forces balance and neutralize each other, the lower the pressure on Algeria's governing elite to conclude pacts over new democratic rules of the game with the main contesting forces, and the better this elite's chance to further fine-tune authoritarian practices in order to meet the formal requirements of the democratization paradigm so *en vogue* in global political discourse.

Annex 1

Table 1 Algeria, economic data 1994–2004

	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004
<i>GDP growth (in %)</i>	-0.9	4.1	5.1	2.4	4.1	5.2
<i>Sectoral distribution of real GDP growth (in %)</i>						
<i>Hydrocarbon industries</i>	--	6.3	4.0	4.9	3.7	3.3
<i>Non-hydrocarbon industries</i>						
<i>Public</i>	--	-13.4	9.2	-1.9	-1.0	--
<i>Private</i>	--	0.0	5.0	5.3	6.6	--
<i>Trade balance (in \$US billions)</i>	--	4.13	1.51	12.30	6.70	14.27
<i>Hydrocarbons (in % of all exports)</i>	--	95.7	96.4	97.3	96.8	97.9
<i>Others</i>	--	4.3	3.6	2.7	3.2	2.1
<i>Hydrocarbon revenues (in % of total revenues)</i>	--	63.0	55.0	76.9	62.9	70.9
<i>Non-hydrocarbon revenues (in % of total revenues)</i>	--	37.0	45.0	23.1	37.1	29.1
<i>Gross official reserves (in \$US billions)</i>	--	4.2	6.8	11.9	23.1	43.1
<i>External debt, (DOD, in current \$US billions)</i>	30.23	33.64	30.68	25.27	22.78	21.80
<i>Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)</i>	29.0	18.7	5.0	0.3	1.4	--

Source: IMF and World Bank Data

Annex 2

Table 2 Background of ministers in the second Benflis cabinet

Experience in politics

Prior cabinet member		Career in FLN	
Yes	No	Yes	No
19	21	7	33

Former member of parliament or senate			
n.s.	Senate	APN	None
1	2	12	25

Army/revolutionary background

Army			Revolutionary		
n.s.	Yes	No	n.s.	Yes	No
1	1 (sécurité militaire)	38	2	4	34

Foreign experience

Foreign-educated			Employed in international organizations (UN organizations, World Bank, WHO, OPEC, OUA)		
n.s.	Yes	No	n.s.	Yes	No
2	13	25	1	7	32

Place of foreign education (incl. overlaps)	
France	8
Great Britain	2
USA	1
USSR	1
Morocco	1
Tunisia	1
Syria	1

Professional background

<i>Field of studies</i>		<i>Field of former occupation (incl. overlaps)</i>	
n.s.	4	Public administration (judge, public prosecutor, <i>wali</i> , diplomat, etc.)	2
Law	9	Government bureaucracy	1
			3
Engineering	7	Academic	8
Economics	6	Envoy to international organizations	7
Administration (ENA)	5	Public economy	6
Medicine	4	State media	2
Others	5	Civil society	1
		Army	1
		Party functionary	1

Source: Algerian government website and interviews

Notes

Introduction

- 1 A part of these studies focused on the question of succession, cf. for instance Henderson (1994) and Willis (1999). In other studies elites constituted one important aspect but not necessarily the focal point of the research, cf. for instance Perthes (1995), Salamé (1994), Hammoudi (1997).
- 2 Cf. *International Herald Tribune*, 30 October 2003.
- 3 'Le régime n'est ni dictatorial, ni démocratique, ni présidentiel, ni parlementaire . . . Nous ne sommes certes pas dans une monarchie mais sommes nous tout à fait dans une république pour autant?' (The regime is neither dictatorial, nor democratic, nor presidential, nor parliamentary . . . We are certainly not in a monarchy but are we completely in a republic for all that?) Général-major Mohamed Touati, the president's adviser for security affairs, in *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 16 March 2004.
- 4 Cf. mainly O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) and Przeworski (1991, 1992); also Burton *et al.* (1992), Burton and Higley (2001).
- 5 A Belgian senator in *Le Monde*, 11 April 2004. Most of the 120 international observers came to similar conclusions, albeit based on impressions from election day only.
- 6 Cf. *Le Monde*, 16 April 2004.
- 7 Cf. www.freedom.house.org.
- 8 The concept of politically relevant elite was developed in a research project in which this author participated, 'Elite Change in the Arab World', at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin. Research for this book was conducted largely within the framework of this project.
- 9 An author who argues along those lines is Kedourie (1994); Huntington (1991: 308–10) also sees Islam as an impediment to democracy, albeit one that can be overcome, but only with difficulties.
- 10 Cf. Bernard Lewis, a spiritus rector of the George W. Bush administration's democratization policies in the Middle East, in the *Wall Street Journal*, 3 February 2004.
- 11 In contrast to the ex-socialist countries discussed by Offe (1994: 64ff.), a third, territorial dimension of this dilemma, the redrawing of borders, was not an issue in the Algerian case.
- 12 Unless noted otherwise, all interviews referred to in this study were conducted in Algeria.

II Elites and the question of transition in Algeria: theoretical and methodological challenges

- 1 Especially developed by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Przeworski (1991: 54–79), Burton *et al.* (1992), Mainwaring *et al.* (1992).
- 2 The term 'system change' as used in this study refers to the transition from one type of polity (authoritarianism) to a different type of polity (for instance, but not necessarily, democracy). System reform means adaptations within the existing system (e.g. a more pluralistic authoritarianism).
- 3 The terminology used in the transition literature to describe those in the regime opposing the hardliners ranges from 'softliners' to 'liberalizers' or 'reformers'. This study will stick to the term 'reformer' because 'softliner' in the Algerian context can be misleading: it is often used to describe political positions on issues such as amnesty for radical Islamists but does not necessarily imply a general preparedness for (broad) political concessions.
- 4 For developments leading up to the 1988 events, cf. Faath (1990), Rouadjia (1994), Hidouci (1995), Ruf (1997: 66–77), Hasel (2002: 24–48).
- 5 Cf. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Nr 1910, 14. June 2001; *La Tribune*, 3 October 2003.
- 6 Cf. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986); Przeworski (1986, 1991, 1992).
- 7 Cf. Roberts (2003), for convincing arguments that the introduction of a multi-party 'democracy' in Algeria was merely an attempt to bring critics back into the fold.
- 8 The FIS leadership was divided between those prepared to install an Islamic state and stick to democratic rules and those who wanted to use the democratic system to come to power and then install an Islamic state and (if necessary) abolish democratic rules. For a detailed account of the emergence of the FIS and the outlook of its various leaders, cf. Labat (1995).
- 9 The army forced the president to resign after he had already dissolved parliament. This left a power vacuum which the army filled by installing the Haut Conseil d'Etat, an institution not foreseen in the constitution, and by placing a candidate of its choice at the head of this institution.
- 10 Przeworski (1991, 1992) convincingly shows that this is the only way a transition towards democracy can work, because it means that the hardliners are out of the game, and the radical opposition forces are kept in check by moderate ones.
- 11 An elite is fragmented according to Burton and Higley (2001: 187–9) when 'elites are arrayed across numerous competing and conflicting factions and functional domains' and when 'networks of contacts and access do not cut across these functions in any dense and interlocked ways'.
- 12 Burton *et al.* (1992: 13) define elite settlements as 'relatively rare events in which warring elite factions suddenly and deliberately reorganize their relations by negotiating compromises on their most basic disagreements' and on new rules of the political game. Elite convergence 'is initiated when some of the opposing factions in the disunified elites that characterize such [unconsolidated] democracies discover that by forming a broad electoral coalition they can mobilize a reliable majority of voters, win elections repeatedly, and thereby protect their interests by dominating government executive power' (*ibid.*: 24).
- 13 However, as Bos (1996: 103) rightly points out, the virtual exclusion of such structural factors exists mainly in transition literature's generalized conclusions and abstracted theoretical models but not in many of the case studies using these approaches.
- 14 Interestingly enough, the time dimension of transition processes is under-addressed in transition literature. Rustow (1970: 347), being one of the few to explicitly address such structures, rightly points to the fact that democratization

- involves the emergence of new social groups and the formation of new habits and thus requires thinking in a time frame that could extend beyond one generation.
- 15 In Algeria, the secular, democracy-oriented and economically liberal Berber party *Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie* (RCD) which was in government until 2001, for instance, would seem to fall into the category of reformers but in fact took hard-line and anti-democratic positions vis-à-vis the idea of a pact with the FIS and even with more moderate Islamists.
 - 16 Przeworski (1991) examines political dynamics of economic reforms and asks which economic reform strategy is in the long run least likely to threaten democratic stability. However, he does not address the way economic liberalization affects early transition processes and the prospects for democratization, and does not focus on the micro-level, i.e. that of specific economic networks and what they mean for liberalization and democratization.
 - 17 Theorists using more structure-oriented approaches to political transformation, such as Offe (1994: 57), made the parallel onset of democratization and market reforms a central topic of their research.
 - 18 Cf., for instance, 'Élections Présidentielles en Algérie', *International Crisis Group Report*, 13 April 1999.
 - 19 Cf. 'La Concorde civile: une initiative de paix manquée', *International Crisis Group Report*, 9 July 2001.
 - 20 This so-called Platform of Rome was immediately rejected by the Algerian government, and the FLN leadership responsible for co-signing it was ostracized.
 - 21 The Berberophone FFS (Front des Forces Socialistes) and the Trotskyite PT (Parti des Travailleurs).
 - 22 Ennahda and MSP (Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix).
 - 23 According to the six criteria – legitimization of rule, access to rule, claim to rule, way of ruling, monopoly of rule and structure of rule – used by Merkel and Croissant (2000: 7) to distinguish between totalitarian regimes, authoritarian regimes, defect democracies and democracies based on rule of law, Algeria in 2004 still fell squarely into the category of authoritarian regimes.
 - 24 For overviews of (early) elite approaches cf. Lenczowski (1975), Putnam (1976), Bottomore (1993). For a comprehensive compilation of writings of elite theorists, including more recent ones, cf. Etzioni-Halevy (1993).
 - 25 For more on the 'Third Wave', cf. Huntington (1991).
 - 26 Mosca called it the 'political class', Pareto the 'governing elite'.
 - 27 Notably, Lasswell (1948), Lasswell *et al.* (1952).
 - 28 Such as Quandt (1969), Waterbury (1970), Lenczowski (1975), Tachau (1975), Zartman (1980).
 - 29 Such as Quandt (1969), Zartman (1975), Entelis (1983).
 - 30 Quandt's argument thus deconstructed a main myth of early icons of Tiers Mondisme like Frantz Fanon (1961).
 - 31 These intermediating elites are comparable to Mosca's (1939) category of sub-elites but cover a wider spectrum, for they include elites that do not occupy formal positions.
 - 32 Cf., for example, Harik's (1980) study on power and elites.
 - 33 Zartman (1983: 12), for instance, wrote: "'Traditional" patterns of elite circulation – that is those based on tribe, land, and religion and separate from secular education – are irrelevant in all five countries' (i.e. in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt).
 - 34 Zartman (1983: 31) did predict the rise of 'Islamic leadership' as 'a reaction to the dominant role of technocrats' in the 1970s. At the same time Zartman (*ibid.*: 19) misinterpreted the form and underestimated the militancy of such a rise of leadership with Islamic values by stating that 'any Islamic revival is likely to take

- the form represented by Qaddafi rather than Khomeini – that is, led by a secular leader who wants to use Islam as a modernizing ideology’.
- 35 Luciani (1990) places states in which more than 40 per cent of GDP comes from such rents in the category of allocation (i.e. rentier) states.
 - 36 Cf. ‘Algeria: Statistical Appendix’ (IMF 2006).
 - 37 For instance, rents that resulted from import and distribution licences moving from the state to private sector elites, who in many cases managed to establish a monopoly in a certain sector or over a certain good between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s, cf. Martinez (2000), Dillman (2000: 83).
 - 38 In this they were strongly influenced by Almond and Verba’s (1963) concept of political culture. Almond and Verba (*ibid.*: 33) suggested that the ‘relationship between the attitudes and motivations of the discrete individuals who make up political systems and the character and performance of political systems may be discovered systematically through the concepts of political culture’.
 - 39 The idea of using influence as a criterion for relevance and of locating different actors belonging to the elite in three concentric circles was developed in the collective research project on ‘Elite Change in the Arab World’, cf. Perthes (2004b: 5–6) in which this author participated. The idea of visualizing the permeability of the three circles and of visually suggesting intra-elite dynamics between the three circles (cf. Figure II.2 and particularly Figure IV.1) was, however, developed by this author.
 - 40 Nuisance power refers to the ability to present a thorn in the side of the governing elite to such an extent that the latter ends up taking positions of those exerting nuisance power into account in decision-making processes. Nuisance power can thus turn into either bargaining or veto power.
 - 41 McAdam *et al.* (1996: 2–3) speak of opportunity structures in the context of the emergence of new social movements and define these structures as ‘the broader set of political constraints and opportunities unique to the national context in which they [the social movements] are embedded’.
 - 42 Mannheim (1952) and Eisenstadt (1956) use the term ‘generation’ primarily in a biological rather than a metaphoric sense.
 - 43 Cf., for instance, Bude (1995).
 - 44 Proceeding in this way renders the question of whether fifteen, twenty-five or thirty-year time spans should be used to divide generations more or less irrelevant, because landmark formative experiences delineate generations that comprise varying numbers of birth years.
 - 45 This generation actually consisted of more than one biological generation. In the contemporary Algerian PRE we still find two ‘biological’ generations of the revolution. These generations are united by the experience of colonialism and the war of independence.
 - 46 Algerian political discourse, while not using these variables explicitly, delineates (political) generations in much the same way.
 - 47 Defined by Quandt (1969: 18) as ‘a process, in which an individual acquires value-laden political identifications, gains knowledge of the political system, forms judgements of various types of political behavior, and develops skills which are useful in a political career’.
 - 48 Collective historical experiences are one important aspect of political socialization, but because they are interpreted according to earlier acquired political identifications, they are treated separately here.
 - 49 Hereafter, when speaking of attitudes what is meant are always voiced attitudes. While this author does not assume that individuals interviewed or questioned in surveys ‘systematically’ lie about their orientations, she does not exclude that some interviewees attempted to live up to expectations projected upon the Western interviewee. In combination with other variables, such as political socialization

and experiences that marked an individual, it usually became clear when an interviewee was trying to please rather than to utter deep-felt convictions – this was, however, rarely the case.

- 50 The term ‘ideal-type’ was used by Weber (1973: 190–2) for different highly abstracted and constructed forms of rule (e.g. charismatic) that in the purity of the ideal-type construction were not found in reality. The elite types presented in this study are termed ideal-types because they, too, are even if to a much lesser extent abstracted categories that in their purity were rarely found among ‘real life’ elites.
- 51 Cf. Addi (1995, 1999) for an analysis of such social structures and practices, the substantial transformations they underwent and their impact on political life in Algeria.
- 52 Own translation.
- 53 Such socio-culturally rooted perceptions of political practices could be subsumed under the more general term of political culture (cf. Almond and Verba 1963, 1989). The reason this term is avoided in this study is twofold. First, the concept of political culture is burdened by the controversy over whether culture produces structure (ibid.) – a debate futile in the context of this study, for socio-cultural perceptions are but one element linked to the production of political structures, with economic structures and other factors seen as equally important for the explanation of the nature of political structures. Second, concepts of political culture tend to be too broad and at the same time too vague for the purpose of this study, and would in any case need to be broken down and specified in order to be operationalized.
- 54 It may be surprising that the role of Islam in socio-cultural perceptions of politics is not mentioned explicitly. The reason for this is that most of these perceptions are a mélange of traditions that have little to do with Islam (such as Berber tradition preceding Islam) and with traditions that are in popular perceptions ascribed to Islam – whether they indeed go back to the Koran is an entirely different question. Werenfels (2002b), for instance, shows that many of the leadership qualities deemed attractive go back to concepts of masculinity that could be said to have roots in Islam but that were and are still found in Southern European non-Islamic countries as well. The interest of this study is not to find out more about the roots of perceptions of politics, but to see what perceptions exist and how they affect politics.
- 55 Own translation. For further discussion of the concept, cf. Gellner and Waterbury (1977), Eisenstadt and Lemarchand (1981), Eisenstadt and Roniger (1999), Pawelka (2000).
- 56 To view clientelism per se as completely precluding transition would, however, be problematic since countries with clientelist structures (e.g. Italy) have become democratic. Indeed, such structures did not necessarily disappear in Italy but exhibited a great adaptability to a changing socio-economic and political context and took on new functions (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1981: 272).
- 57 ‘Institutions’ in this context means what North (1995: 23) defined as ‘the rules of the game of a society, or, more formally, the humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction. They are composed of formal rules (statute law, common law, regulations), informal constraints (conventions, norms of behaviour and self-imposed codes of conduct) and the enforcement characteristics of both.’
- 58 In this they differ from North’s (1990) political transaction costs that assume a plethora of political interests involved in institutional change and point to the high costs of organizing side payments for opponents of a change, i.e. they assume a process of voluntary contracts. Khan’s transition costs in contrast assume that the will or the possibilities for such voluntary contracts are missing – they thus are the more useful concept for analysis of resistance to change in Algeria.

III The shaping of the Algerian political system and its elites

- 1 Cf. *Le Matin*, 25 May 2003; *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 26 Mai 2003.
- 2 Cf., for instance, *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 14 January 2004.
- 3 In such states the approach to policy-making was technocratic and bureaucratic rather than political, i.e. policies were not shaped by social and economic demands of the different segments of society and through formal political processes, such as elections, cf. O'Donnell (1979).
- 4 Defined by Pawelka (2000: 395) as 'a system of personal rule which derives its basis of legitimization from traditional loyalties and material obligations' (own translation). This system implies the intertwining of patrimonial and rational-bureaucratic rule, and paternalistic strategies that employ the help of complex bureaucratic apparatuses (ibid.). For discussions of neo-patrimonialism, cf. Eisenstadt (1973), Pawelka (2000: 396–8).
- 5 Cf. Leca and Vatin (1979: 16ff.).
- 6 The dictate of national unity and the ensuing forced social and cultural homogenization – expressed in Ben Bella's famous sentence: 'Nahna arab, nahna arab, nahna asharat million arab' (We are Arabs, we are Arabs, 10 million Arabs), as quoted by al-Saidawi (2000: 48), put a lid on the Algerian society's diversity and contributed to (Kabyle-)Berber disenchantment from the early days of independence. Moreover, the state's monopolization of the interpretation of Islam and the amalgamation of Islam with socialism contributed to the emergence of Islamist contesters in the 1970s and 1980s.
- 7 Ben Bella was one of the revolution's nine historic leaders; the other eight were: Hocine Aït-Ahmed, Mustapha Ben Boulaid, Larbi Ben M'Hidi, Rabah Bitat, Mohamed Boudiaf, Mourad Didouche, Mohamed Khider and Krim Belkacem. In 2004 two of these leaders, Ben Bella and Aït-Ahmed, were still alive.
- 8 This chapter draws strongly on Faath (1990), Harbi (2001), Leca and Vatin (1975) Quandt (1969), Yefsah (1994) and Zartman (1983).
- 9 When speaking of the ANP or army as such, one has to take into consideration that the army included different apparatuses with a wide spectrum of functions, including general (political) intelligence (the Sécurité Militaire) and paramilitary police forces (the Gendarmerie). For a detailed account of the internal structures of the ANP up to 1990, cf. Faath (1990).
- 10 Leca and Vatin (1975: 386) however, rightly stress that the APN was not the direct successor of the ALN but in fact taken over by one wing of the revolutionaries only.
- 11 Cf. the preamble to the 1963 constitution.
- 12 Interview with retired Général-major Abdelmadjid Taright (29 October 2002).
- 13 Cf. *Le Matin*, 17 June 2003.
- 14 Efforts to settle the relationship between the civilian and the military leadership in favour of a primacy of the civil and political over the military and to elevate the exterior leadership over the interior during the first FLN congress, in the Kabyle valley of Soummam in 1956, failed. This failure was symbolized by the assassination of Abane Ramdane, the revolutionary who had pushed hardest for civil leadership, by military 'colleagues' in 1958. The assassination of Ramdane and the Platform of Soummam remained issues taboo for years, but began to resurface in a controversial media debate in 2002–3.
- 15 Members of the frontier army, which fought against the French from the Moroccan and Tunisian borders, had in many cases been trained by the French army and later deserted to the ALN; for post-independence competition between the 'professionals' and the maquisards, cf. Quandt (1969); Entelis (1983: 94ff.).
- 16 Not surprisingly, no academic research on the SM has been done. Hence, the extent and exact nature of its involvement in the economy and politics during the

- different post-independence periods and up to the present day remain subject to much speculation.
- 17 In Algeria this largely bloodless coup was sold as a *réajustement révolutionnaire*, cf. Ruf (1997: 66).
 - 18 Of the twenty-six council members, twenty-two were ex-moudjahidine or professional army officers – most of them with links to what became known as the ‘Clan of Oujda’. This clan – a clan not in the anthropological but rather in the metaphoric sense – named after the Moroccan border-town in which these revolutionaries had fought comprised, among others, the prominent post-independence elites Ben Bella, Boumedienne and Bouteflika.
 - 19 According to the constitution, the party, for instance, was to pre-select the one presidential candidate who would then be presented to the Algerian voters, cf. Art. 105 in the 1976 constitution. This *de facto* put the army in the position of *Königsmacher* because it dominated the FLN’s political bureau.
 - 20 Serious insurgencies during the first years of independence, however, came from within the army, as in 1967 with the attempted coup by Colonel Zbiri, then head of the army’s general command.
 - 21 From a speech of Boumedienne in 1965, cf. Leca and Vatin (1975: 396).
 - 22 For backgrounds of revolutionary leaders, cf. Quandt (1969: 45ff.); also Harbi (2001).
 - 23 Chadli himself and his wife placed family members in influential positions in the economy and became involved in shady business affairs themselves (Hadjadj 2001: 41ff.). According to Yefsah (1994: 86), ‘Chadlisme’ became synonymous with corruption.
 - 24 For the different reform steps implemented and their ‘side-effects’ on the elite as well as for the consequences of resource contraction, cf. Dahmani (1999: 57ff.).
 - 25 This author witnessed time and again how acquaintances turned to army officers when they ran into trouble. Also, the Algerian media in the early 2000s on several occasions reported how impostors managed to obtain unconditional loans or free cars simply by presenting a (fake) card identifying them as SM or regular army officers, and/or as the son of a general, cf. *Le Quotidien d’Oran*, 21 October 2002; *Le Matin*, 23 January 2003.
 - 26 The FLN was formed in 1954 in a rupture with the popular and nationalist movement PPA/MLTD that had been the motor of the anti-colonial struggle prior to the FLN’s taking on that role. For the emergence of the party, cf. Quandt (1969), Harbi (1980, 2001), Roberts (1993: 116–17).
 - 27 Quandt (1969: 7) wrote that there was little consensus on ‘how the country should be governed, how power should be used, and how political relationships should be ordered’.
 - 28 Drafted at the fourth FLN congress.
 - 29 The UGTA was the oldest of these organizations; it had been founded in 1956 and had been an important force for popular mobilization during the war of independence.
 - 30 However, many of the party’s top elites in the first three decades of Algerian independence emerged from other channels and ended up in the FLN’s highest bodies without having worked their way up from within the party (Rouadja 1994: 212). This was particularly true for army elites, who typically occupied more than a third of the seats in the Comité Central.
 - 31 The Oulémas were what Quandt (1969: 36) called ‘religious modernists’. They had been an important force in the early days of the revolution, and had initially focused on educational and identity demands that could be summarized in the well-known revolutionary slogan: ‘Islam is my religion, Arabic is my language, Algeria is my fatherland’ (ibid.: 37).

- 32 Former core elite member under Boumedienne, Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi (who had been, among other things, education and foreign minister), who in the 1990s belonged to the regime contesting camp, went as far as to argue that there had been more pluralism and political competition within the FLN under Boumedienne than there was in the early 2000s with roughly four dozen legal parties. Ibrahimi in 2002 still defended the fact that no democratic system had been installed in 1962, arguing that the country at that time needed an authoritarian system and that democracy could not have worked (interview, 27 January 2002).
- 33 For more on this *code de la famille*, which was a highly contested issue in the late 1990s and early 2000s, cf. Pruvost (2002: 265ff.).
- 34 Cf. Talahite (2000: 53).
- 35 However, as Tachau (1975: 297) noted, social mobility in the first years after independence was fairly high.
- 36 Boumedienne, being an Arabophone, presented one of the prominent exceptions. The ministers with whom he surrounded himself, however, were French educated and army officers close to him had graduated from French military academies (Quandt 1969: 13).
- 37 Rouadjia (1994: 303ff.) furnishes vast empirical evidence of how army elites and high functionaries, e.g. *walis* (prefects of the Algerian provinces), legally, semi-legally and illegally exploited the state.
- 38 The economic experiments in the short Ben Bella era – mainly with *autogestion* (self-management) – had little lasting impact on the Algerian economy.
- 39 A private sector focusing mainly on production of consumer goods did, however, always exist and roughly 30 per cent of Algerians in the 1970s and 1980s were employed in the private sector (Dillman 2000: 19ff.). Yet this private sector was completely dependent on the state since foreign trade and currency, and the banking system, were firmly controlled by the state.
- 40 For a compact discussion of these policies, cf. Entelis (1986: 111ff.), Ruf (1997: 86ff.).
- 41 From the early 1980s, Algerian hydrocarbon exports shifted from crude oil to natural gas, which has ever since accounted for a majority of hydrocarbon revenues. With the price of gas linked to the oil price, Algeria profited from the oil price hikes in 1973 and from 1979 to 1981.
- 42 Technical and economic parameters, such as efficiency, cost minimization, the manageability of an enterprise and the practicality of a location, were usually not considered. For the Algerian state economy pre 1989, cf. Chikhi (1989: 178–212), El-Kenz (1989: 1–31), Hidouci (1995), Ruf (1997), Dahmani (1999).
- 43 Entelis (1999: 18), using the example of the state-owned hydrocarbon empire Sonatrach, illustrated this permanent exchange of high-ranking government officials and their counterparts in Sonatrach.
- 44 The main steps were the breaking down of large public conglomerates into smaller enterprises and an increased role for the private sector, which received permission to expand in the retail, housing and tourism industries but was still not allowed to engage in commercial relations with foreign companies. Furthermore, investments in small and medium-sized private enterprises was encouraged.
- 45 Rouadjia (1994: 287ff.), for instance, provided with numerous illustrations of how state property moved into private hands of state functionaries for low or no sums.
- 46 This number was released by Algerian hospitals and human rights organizations. Official figures put the death toll at fewer than 200.
- 47 For ways in which Islam was ‘appropriated’ by the regime, cf. Vatiokis (1972), Leca and Vatin (1975: 304ff.; 1979: 20).

- 48 Much of this happened on the campus of the Faculté Centrale of Algiers University. The Islamist opposition movement at that time crystallized around the mosque on that campus. A second city in which the Islamists emerged was Constantine – many of the later-to-be leaders of the FIS came from there (Labat 1995: 75ff.).
- 49 Figures such as Ali Belhadj and Abassi Madani (later the FIS number one and two), or Mahfoudh Nahnah – who incarnated the Algerian wing of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and later headed the moderate Islamist Hamas party and was co-opted into government in the 1990s – signed petitions, engaged in anti-regime demonstrations and spent time in prison.
- 50 In fact, one of the revolution's nine historic leaders, Hocine Aït-Ahmed, organized armed resistance against his former comrade Ben Bella in 1963 in Kabylia but was soon defeated.
- 51 Disputes over economic reforms were carried into the public by two official newspapers, *Algérie-Actualité*, which was the reformers' mouthpiece, and *El Moudjahid*, which was the reform-opponents' platform, cf. Dahmani (1999: 86).
- 52 The fact that the army remained in the political bureau reflected factional struggles within the army, which was by no means unanimously in favour of a retreat from formal politics. Abdelmadjid Taright, one of the generals sitting in the Comité Central at the time, told this author that there was enormous resistance among some of his military colleagues to give up their formal political positions, and that this was particularly true for the older officers sitting in the Bureau Politique (interview 29 October 2002).
- 53 Among the new army top elite were the generals Mohamed and Smail Lamari, Toufik Mediène and Khaled Nezzar, who together with very few other generals constituted Algeria's core elite as of 1992.
- 54 Circulation of the (hardline) authorities' main mouthpiece *El Moudjahid* dropped from 300,000 to 180,000 within less than two years (Rebah 2002: 19). The state, however, only gave up its monopoly on the printed press. Television and radio remained in the state's hands.
- 55 Prominent examples were parties of revolutionary leaders such as Benyoussef Benkhedda and Krim Belkacem or ex-president Ben Bella.
- 56 This law (Loi 89-11, cf. *Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire*, 5 July 1989) prohibited political parties that were based exclusively on religion, culture or language.
- 57 Ruf (1997: 83) cites an interview with Chadli in which the latter says that he could well imagine a cohabitation (as practised in France by Mitterrand with the conservative parliamentary majority and government) with the FIS.
- 58 For the different visions within the FIS of what such an Islamic state should look like, cf. Labat (1995: 54ff.).
- 59 The FIS won 188 out of 430 seats in the first round of the elections, the Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS), the Berberophone party of former revolutionary Hocine Aït-Ahmed deeply rooted in Kabylia, came in second with twenty-five seats, and the FLN third with only fifteen seats.
- 60 According to the janvieriste Abdelmadjid Taright, roughly thirty officers were involved in taking the decision to break off the elections, of whom three opposed the abortion of the elections (interview, 29 October 2002).
- 61 An argument repeatedly made in interviews (September and October 2002) by this author with senior political figures who had supported the coup was that 'Hitler too had been elected democratically, and wouldn't it have been better to stop him?'
- 62 The other members were: two generals (Larbi Belkheir and Khaled Nezzar) and two prominent revolutionaries (Ali Haroun and Redha Malek) and a former diplomat and rector of the Paris Mosque (Tijani Haddam).

- 63 He was killed by a member of the security forces guarding him. Whether the killer acted alone or on behalf of certain political forces has remained in dispute. An official inquiry concluded that the killer was an Islamist who had acted on behalf of his ideology. Boudiaf's family claimed (and most Algerians believed) that Boudiaf was killed by 'the generals', among other things because of his inquiries into their corruption networks. For the controversial circumstances, cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 29 June 2003.
- 64 Boudiaf and Kafi had merely carried the title 'Président du HCE'.
- 65 In 1994 and 1995 the Islamist insurgents managed to strongly destabilize the country and it was not evident that the army would be able to prevail and bring the situation back under control, cf. Martinez (2000).
- 66 For details on these negotiations, cf. ICG (2001).

IV The politically relevant elite 1995 to 2004: structures, actors, dynamics

- 1 When this author explained to Algerians, be they bank clerks, taxi drivers, journalists or activists in NGOs, that she was doing research on Algerian elites, she was either told that the 'real elites' had left the country or she was asked the question: 'Research where? Here, or in Paris?'
- 2 SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) defines this sort of conflict as consisting of at least 25 and fewer than 1,000 battle-related deaths. In 2003, official Algerian figures put the number of such deaths at 900. At the peak of terrorism in the mid-1990s, the yearly death toll in Algeria according to official statistics was over 7,000 (counting civilians and army only, but not so-called terrorists). In 2002, the Algerian press still counted 1,562 'terror-related' deaths, including 633 civilians, 278 members of the security forces, and 651 'terrorists' (cf. *Le Matin*, 13 November 2003).
- 3 According to the Conseil National Économique et Social (CNES) 400,000 Algerian cadres, close to 1.5 per cent of the overall Algerian population, left the country between 1992 and 1996, mainly for France or Canada (*Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 17 December 2002).
- 4 The figures on overall victims of the civil war vary significantly. The official Algerian death toll in 2002 was 37,000. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in 2003 both spoke of more than 100,000 dead and 7,000 missing persons between 1992 and 1998. The US Committee for Refugees in 2001 also put the death toll at more than 100,000 and the number of internally displaced persons at between 100,000 and 200,000. Algeria Watch even spoke of 200,000 casualties and up to 10,000 missing persons.
- 5 For an excellent account of the civil war, cf. Martinez (2000); also Stora (2001), El-Kadi (2003) and Lowi (2005).
- 6 According to official figures 98.6 per cent of the population voted for the Concorde civile, and the rate of participation was 85 per cent.
- 7 It enabled armed fighters to lay down their weapons during a period of six months, in exchange for partial or full amnesty, depending on their individual actions. For more on the controversial Concorde civile (law 99-08), see ICG (2001), Bouandel (2002), El-Kadi (2003), Martinez (2003: 10–11). In the wake of the Concorde civile President Bouteflika initiated a highly controversial and sweeping amnesty that also included fighters accused of committing massacres and was opposed both by parts of the military hierarchy and opposition forces, cf. *Le Monde* 26 November 1999, Mellah (2003).
- 8 Most prominently Souaidia (2001) and Samraoui (2003), the latter being the former military attaché in Bonn. Even if one assumed some exaggeration and settling of personal accounts, the evidence presented was devastating for the core

- elites and their 'helping hands'. Another important stage for anti-regime publicity was the website of the Mouvement Algérien des Officiers Libres (MAOL), where ex-army officers published information incriminating the military hierarchy.
- 9 Interviews with two high-level military officers and a legal adviser of several military décideurs (all three wished to stay anonymous) January, March and October 2002.
 - 10 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 26 April 2001; *El Watan*, 26 April 2001; *Le Matin*, 27–28 April 2001.
 - 11 The debt rescheduling directly and indirectly provided the Algerian state with \$21 billion (cf. Benderra 2003: 87).
 - 12 Usually owning such a licence implied having a monopoly. A prime sector for the conferring of such licences was the pharmaceutical sector (cf. Dillman 2000: 95, also *La Tribune*, 30 October 2002). Another way to buy loyalties was by privatizing enterprises in the tourist sector to the profit of shareholders close to core elites. Martinez (2000: 124) writes that such privatization 'was aimed at consolidating, indeed entrenching the interests of the new officers of the army, engaged daily in the fight against armed Islamic groups'.
 - 13 The government of Belaid Abdesselam (July 1992 to August 1993) sought to return to the dirigisme of the 1970s.
 - 14 For economic developments in the 1990s and/or early 2000s, cf. Nashashibi *et al.* (1998), Provost (1998), Tlemcani (1999), Joffé (2002); for the hydrocarbon sector, cf. Salamé-Hardy (1998), for the development of the private sector, Dillman (2000); for corruption, and Talahite (2000), and Hadjadj (2001).
 - 15 For more on such networks, cf. Hadjadj (2001: 127–94).
 - 16 Officers could take early retirement after fifteen years of service, in which case they receive a reduced pension. After twenty-five years of service they receive a full pension regardless of their age.
 - 17 Cf. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, No. 1910, 14 June 2001. With 80 per cent of basic foodstuffs being imported in the late 1990s, owning an exclusive import or distribution licence in this sector was particularly attractive. The fact that the Algerian non-hydrocarbon sectors altogether in 2002 counted 40,000 importers but only 400 exporters (cf. *El Moudjahid*, 17 October 2002) spoke for itself.
 - 18 Interviews with Algerian and foreign businessmen (January and October 2002).
 - 19 For more on the state of the legal system, cf. Brahimi (1998).
 - 20 Cf., for instance, Mehri (2003) who exposes economic ties ('joint ventures') between bureaucrats, union executives, private businessmen and elected politicians.
 - 21 In fact, it would be correct to speak of the 'trabendization' of the entire Algerian economy. Trabendo comes from the French term contrebande and since the late 1980s has served to describe 'a parallel trade of smuggled goods combined with access to state supplies' (ICG 2001b: 10). According to a study conducted by the Office National de Statistique (ONS) 40 per cent of GDP in 2003 was generated by informal economic activity.
 - 22 Sound information on corruption within the hydrocarbon sector is extremely difficult to find. Dealings within Sonatrach remained one of the few taboos of the Algerian press. Top executives in foreign oil companies that were minority shareholders in Sonatrach subsidiaries estimated the revenues from the hydrocarbon sector not accounted for to exceed 20 per cent of the total revenues (three interviews in Paris, October 2003).
 - 23 In April 2001, the brutal killing of a young Kabyle in a gendarmerie station in Kabylia sparked uprisings and riots in the entire region. More than 100 Kabyle youth were shot dead by security forces. These events led to the emergence of a protest movement. For excellent accounts of Kabyle history and the 2001

- uprising, see ICG (2003) and Roberts (2001). For general information on Algerian Berbers, cf. Chaker (1998).
- 24 The Kabyles are the largest of several Berber tribes found in Algeria. The other big tribes are the Chaouia, the M'zab and the Touareg.
 - 25 More than a third of the politically relevant elites interviewed by this author either turned out to be Kabyles or said they had Kabyle ancestors. Elites from Kabyle origin included prime ministers, several generals and other prominent members of the political elite.
 - 26 This platform, made public in June 2001, consisted of fifteen demands – some political, some economic, some cultural – which, if applied in their entirety, would imply a change in the rules of domination. The main demands with a national and a regime change dimension were a state that guarantees all socio-economic and democratic rights, and the subordination of all executive functions in the state and of the security forces to the control of democratically elected institutions.
 - 27 In April 2002, the Berber language Tamazight was embodied in the constitution as the second national language. In the autumn of 2003, Tamazight was introduced into the national school curricula from fourth grade onward as an optional course. In 1996, Amazighté ('Berberness') had already been written into the preamble of the constitution as 'une composante fondamentale' of Algerian identity.
 - 28 Several cadres in the moderate Islamist Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix (MSP) fell into this category.
 - 29 Madi (2001: 67–83) gives an excellent account of how the 'Arabization front' formed and successfully undermined education system reforms proposed by Bouteflika.
 - 30 This term was used in a derogatory manner in the Boumedienne era for Algerian officers who had initially fought with the French. Later it was used in colloquial Algerian as a derogatory term for the Francophile elite that was seen to run the country.
 - 31 One instrument for this was the Haut Conseil Islamique (HCI), whose fifteen members were chosen by the president and whose role was to interpret the Koran 'moderately' and to issue fatwas favourable to regime policies.
 - 32 Literally translated, zaouïa means corner or retreat. Zaouïas are religious places – remotely comparable to monasteries – in which saints were buried. They are the 'physical' centres of religious brotherhoods (sufi orders), and include schools in which Koranic texts are taught. Usually zaouïas also accommodate travellers and lodge orphans. In colloquial Algerian, the term zaouïa is used as a synonym for religious brotherhoods. The zaouïas had historically played an important role in Algerian religious as well as social life, and the larger brotherhoods such as the Rahmaniya and the Tidjaniya had tens if not hundreds thousands of people affiliated with them (cf. Rinn 1884: 526–49).
 - 33 This law, in place since 1984, was a regime concession in view of the rise of Islamism and conservatism in the 1980s. It puts women under their father's, husband's or brother's tutelage. Moreover, it relieves the husband of all responsibilities vis-à-vis his wife and children after a divorce and gives him the right to put his family out on the street.
 - 34 For details, see Roberts (1998).
 - 35 In addition to his already wide-ranging powers, the president was given, among other things, the right to rule by decree during parliamentary hiatus (Art. 124), to name all higher cadres including judges (Art. 78), and to name the director of the central bank.
 - 36 For details see Roberts (1998).

- 37 Zeroual was pushed to resign by the military hierarchy, apparently because he opposed the army's deal with Islamist armed groups. But there had also been long struggles between Zeroual and Lamari over control of the Defence Ministry; for details cf. Roberts (2003: 271ff.).
- 38 For more on these elections, cf. Werenfels (2002c).
- 39 Cf. Roberts (1998), Hachemaoui (2003), *Le Monde*, 16 April 2004.
- 40 Bouteflika was one of the first Arab leaders to be invited to the White House after 9/11, and military equipment previously withheld by the US was delivered (cf. Ruf 2003: 21). Also, funds for Algeria in the framework of the International Military Education and Training Programme (IMET) doubled (Barth 2003: 681).
- 41 Cf., for instance, *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 20 July 2003 and 7 September 2003.
- 42 For more on the American–French competition for influence in Algeria, cf. Ravenel (2003).
- 43 The overall number of generals, retired and in office, was estimated in 2003 at around 150 by ex-army insiders and foreign military attachés interviewed.
- 44 A popular Algerian joke goes: 'Bouteflika was elected democratically – by the generals.'
- 45 The presidency is used here as a collective, including not only the president but also his closest and most powerful advisers.
- 46 Since *le pouvoir* is also used to describe a system of domination, *les décideurs* will be used here for the prime decision-makers.
- 47 Belkheir, after Bouteflika's election, had the difficult task of mediating continuous and increasing conflicts between Mohamed Lamari and Bouteflika, and between Bouteflika and prime minister Benflis.
- 48 His power was seen to come from the fact that he was the regime insider serving the longest in key positions, according to ex-minister of economy Ghaci Hidouci (interview, 8 November 2003), who had worked closely with Belkheir for years at the presidency and had been the one pushing Chadli to nominate Nezzar, Lamari and most other generals of the core elite. Hidouci also claimed to have witnessed how Belkheir made other generals dependent on him by involving them in illegal financial dealings, often on the international level. Belkheir, moreover, was accused by Boudiaf's family of having been one of the masterminds of Boudiaf's assassination.
- 49 What was commonly referred to as 'la génération de la révolution' actually consisted of several age cohorts. Those in the core elite in the 1990s and early 2000s all belonged to the youngest age cohort participating in the war of liberation.
- 50 Forty years after independence, these generals still communicated primarily in French. Several of them were not literate in Arabic. General Mohamed Lamari, at his first ever press conference in July 2002, switched to French after half a sentence in his responses to questions asked in Arabic.
- 51 These commanders in 2003 were: Brahim Fodel Chérif (1st military region), Kamel Abderrahmane (2nd region), Ahcène Tafer (3rd region), Abdelmadjid Saheb (4th region), Chérif Abderrazak (5th region), Ali Benali (6th region).
- 52 The gendarmerie was a paramilitary organization and part of the ANP. It had, among other things, been exercising police functions in areas hit hard by armed groups, such as Kabylia.
- 53 Retired Général-major Abdelmadjid Taright told this author how Larbi Belkheir had struggled to convince other core elite members of Bouteflika's candidacy. Belkheir also tried to solicit Taright for Bouteflika's campaign but the latter declined because he felt that Bouteflika 'with his strong autocratic tendencies and coming from an era that was passé' was the wrong candidate (interview, 29 October 2002).
- 54 *Le Matin*, 14 December 2002.

- 55 Cf. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 14–20 June 2001. A number of (formerly) politically relevant actors that had official functions in the 1990s such as prime minister, minister or adviser to the president or the prime minister or in the army's general command shared this assessment (interviews, January and October 2002).
- 56 Said Bouteflika was widely perceived as having been a driving force, together with Larbi Belkheir, behind the firing of Benflis in May 2002 (cf. *Le Matin*, 7 May 2003).
- 57 Zerhouni, with the help of the governor of Algiers, another Bouteflika ally, bullied an Algiers court into forbidding the holding of the extraordinary FLN congress in October 2003. In strong defiance of Bouteflika and his allies, FLN secretary general and ex-prime minister Benflis nevertheless went through with the congress and was declared candidate for the presidential race in 2004 on this occasion (cf. *Le Matin* and *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 2 October 2003).
- 58 Out of twenty politically relevant actors from all three circles of the elite who were asked whom they considered to be the ten most powerful men in Algeria, eleven did not provide names but mentioned the army, eight provided names, and of these eight only three cited names other than generals or the president. Those mentioned were: Issad Rebrab (one of Algeria's biggest industrialists and owner of a newspaper), the president's younger brother Said, and Yazid Zerhouni, the minister of interior. The only person denying that the military dominated the core elite was General Abdelmadjid Taright, who had been the commander of the Algerian naval forces until 1997 and who as one of the *janvieristes* had belonged to the core elite in the early 1990s.
- 59 *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 19 and 26 June 2003.
- 60 During Bouteflika's first term this position was occupied by three different people, Mourad Medelci, Abdelhamid Temmar and Nouredine Boukrouh. The first and the second were close allies of the president. The third was rumoured to have close ties to the DRS and its patron, General Mediène.
- 61 Interview with Benbitour, 14 February 2002; for Benflis, see *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 7 May 2003.
- 62 Benflis' excellent ties to the *décideurs* were visible at his son's wedding (which took place a few months prior to Benflis' being fired) at which three prime decision-makers, Mediène, Belkheir and Mohamed Lamari, sat at Benflis' table. President Bouteflika, however, was not present (interview with three wedding guests 15 February and 1 March 2002).
- 63 Interview with Abdelmadjid Taright and with a number of army officers still in office who wished to stay anonymous (October 2002).
- 64 He had started out with only a handful of advisers in 1999.
- 65 The president often withheld information from those not belonging to his shadow cabinet. There were no institutionalized meetings between the president and his prime minister, his advisers or the cabinet. Bouteflika's advisers, with few exceptions, did not deal with the president directly but with Belkheir, and rarely saw Bouteflika (interviews with three people who worked or had worked with Bouteflika closely, 14 February 2002, 9 October and 27 October 2002).
- 66 One of the reasons the internationally isolated core elite had chosen Bouteflika, a member of the 'Clan of Oujda' and former long time core elite, in 1999 – after having already asked him in vain to become president in 1994 – were Bouteflika's diplomatic skills and excellent contacts in the international arena. He had been foreign minister for more than a decade under Boumedienne and had presided over the UN's General Assembly in 1974/5. After the death of Boumedienne in 1978, he had been one of the possible successors. After losing out to Chadli and a campaign accusing him of embezzling government funds, he went into exile and only returned to Algeria in 1989. People working with him cited his 'lonely journey through the desert' as a reason for his way of ruling, i.e. being 'secretive',

- 'mistrustful', 'impulsive', 'unpredictable', 'unwilling to delegate' and 'deciding on the spur of the moment'. Also, they said he was driven by the notion of getting even with those who dropped him in 1979 (interviews, September and October 2002).
- 67 Cf. n. 37.
 - 68 Ironically, the only two times Algeria had a minister of defence, Boumedienne under Ben Bella and Nezzar under Chadli, these ministers ended up removing the president (in the case of Nezzar it was done together with a few other generals).
 - 69 Cf. *Le Matin*, 13 July 2002. Also, in October 2002, Bouteflika told a senior diplomat in Algeria that he and Mohamed Lamari had not spoken to each other for six months (interview with this diplomat, 2 October 2002).
 - 70 One way the conflicts in the core elite manifested themselves was in the split into a pro-Benflis and a pro-Bouteflika camp prior to the 2004 elections. While Belkheir supported Bouteflika, Lamari appeared to be in favour of Benflis. Mediène apparently changed his mind, moving from Benflis to Bouteflika shortly before the elections (interviews with General Taright and a close relative of Benflis after the 2004 elections).
 - 71 A leading voice in these campaigns was the newspaper *Le Matin* (e.g. 22 December 2002 and 3 July 2003). Also, newspaper comments with sentences like 'Démissionnez, partez, quittez le pays, vous êtes indésirable, vous êtes responsable de tous nos malheurs!' (Resign, go, leave the country, you are undesirable, you are responsible for all our misfortunes! *Le Matin*, 25 May 2003) were not uncommon as of 2003.
 - 72 The papers were not directly suspended: the four state printers simply refused to print them, citing the newspapers' debts as the reason for their refusal.
 - 73 It involved allowing foreign companies to become majority stockholders in hydrocarbon exploitation, something hitherto reserved for the state company, Sonatrach.
 - 74 *Le Matin*, 7 September 2002 and 14 December 2002.
 - 75 A case in point was the privatization of non-hydrocarbon state industries, cf. Werenfels (2002a).
 - 76 In an interview accorded to the Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram*, 16 June 2003.
 - 77 This author attended the symposium to which over 100 foreign government officials and researchers had been invited.
 - 78 The army also tried to improve internal information policies. In 2003, for instance, it for the first time produced daily reviews of the domestic and international press for its higher officers.
 - 79 Cf., for instance, *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 11 September 2003. Persons close to the generals also aired this idea off the record (Interview, 17 January and 29 October 2002).
 - 80 Own translation. Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 19 September 2003 and 16 October 2003.
 - 81 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 1 October 2003. These hymns prompted General Touati to publicly demand that politicians stop praising the army, cf. *El Khabar*, 14 October 2003.
 - 82 After the elections a number of commentators rightly noted that army neutrality had de facto equalled taking a pro-Bouteflika position, for the army closed its eyes to the president's abuse of the legal system and his muzzling of the private press.
 - 83 Cf. a comment in *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 8 May 2003, that spoke of the fact that Benflis during his time as prime minister had always been supportive not necessarily of Bouteflika's style of rule but of his hesitancy to push reforms in most areas, including the legal field.
 - 84 *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 2 October 2003.

- 85 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran* (14 January 2004). One caricature read: 'Les Algériens veulent qu'on les débarrasse de Boutef' (The Algerians want someone to rid them of Boutef) and has an Algerian saying: 'On compte sur dieu . . . et Mohamed' (We trust in God . . . and Mohamed) – meaning Mohamed Lamari (*Liberté*, 6 September 2003).
- 86 Cf. Amnesty International (1998).
- 87 The term 'civil society actors', however, must be used with a caveat, for a majority of actors falling into this category were closely linked to core elites and often either cadres in former parti unique mass organizations still functioning as transmission belts or in new organizations aspiring to such a function.
- 88 The moderate Islamist MSP had already been co-opted into government in 1994. In contrast to the FIS it wanted to change the system from within and thus pursued politics of entrisme, cf. Hamladji (2002).
- 89 Weber (1992: 16) wrote that there are two ways to make a profession from politics: either 'man lebt für die Politik' (one lives for politics) or 'man lebt von der Politik' (one lives from politics), the second implying that one is in politics mainly to make a permanent source of income for oneself.
- 90 Among the president's 'men' was also a woman – Khalida Toumi Messaoudi, the minister of information and culture, and the government spokesperson – but she represented an exception to the rule.
- 91 The MALG (Ministère de l'Armement et des Liaisons Générales), predecessor of the Sécurité Militaire, still constituted an important network forty years after the war of independence. Of the roughly 500 'Malgache' alive in 2002, six were generals, three were ministers, a number ambassadors, and one the powerful wali of Algiers.
- 92 Five of these ministers were fired by Bouteflika in August 2003, and six more FLN ministers loyal to Benflis resigned collectively on 2 October 2002, when the clampdown on the Benflis wing of the FLN, led by foreign minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem, intensified.
- 93 Even though the Oulémas had lost political importance after independence they remained an important solidarity network, cf. Haddab (2000).
- 94 For profiles of Algeria's richest and most influential businessmen, cf. Sayad and Naili (2000), Verdier (2002).
- 95 For business associations and their agendas in the early and mid-1990s, cf. Dillman (2000: 50–5).
- 96 The FCE, for example, addressed the minister of energy and mines in two page newspaper ads and voiced its very specific objections to the proposed new hydro-carbon law (*La Tribune*, October 2002). Also, it tried to encourage consumption of domestically produced goods through a highly publicized campaign, featuring conferences and newspapers ads.
- 97 The number of strategic marriages did not appear to be high, but ties between military, business and political elites were in some cases based on intermarriage. The daughter of Khaled Nezzar in a first marriage was married to the son of a successful businessman and the nephew of an ex-minister who had been the number two of the Berberophone Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie (RCD) party. The daughter of Issad Rebrab, one of the country's biggest industrialists, was married to an army officer who was the son of former HCE member and prime minister Redha Malek.
- 98 Interview with FCE member who wished to stay anonymous (29 September 2002).
- 99 This son of a former minister, prominent Malgache and a founding father of the Sécurité Militaire moved within seven years from owner of a small pharmaceutical enterprise to head of Algeria's largest business empire, which included a private bank and an airline. Cf. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18 July 2002.

- 100 According to official figures, the Khalifa disaster cost the Algerian state more than 120 billion Algerian dinars (DA), or over US \$1.5 billion; cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 10 November 2003.
- 101 After the collapse of the Khalifa Bank it became clear that it had not (just) been a space for laundering money or giving credits to figures close to the core elite but that several public institutions had placed their pension funds in the bank because it offered better conditions than other banks (cf. *Le Monde*, 21 March 2003).
- 102 One could rightly raise the question whether Sidi Said acted just on the workers' behalf or also on that of generals in the core elite who were opposing the bill.
- 103 Among other things, the national minimum wage was raised by 20 per cent; allowances for close to 900,000 public service employees were also raised by 20 per cent. Ouyahia's successful negotiations with the UGTA could, furthermore, be explained with the close ties existing between his party, the RND, and the UGTA: eight of the UGTA's top cadres were also cadres of the RND, in one case a member of the party executive.
- 104 For more on these ties, cf. Benamrouche (2000).
- 105 Among these privileges were a yearly pension of – depending on the rank occupied during the war – between 92,000 DA (\$1,196) and 620,000 DA (\$8,065), a right to duty-free car import and, until the 1990s, the right to a taxi licence. In 2003, veteran pensioners received two and a half times the minimum wage, while regular pensioners only got 75 per cent of the minimum wage (cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 18 September 2003).
- 106 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 27 October 2003 and 10 January 2004.
- 107 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 20 April 2002.
- 108 Interview with one of the organization's founders, 2 March 2002.
- 109 Cf. *Le Matin*, 6 October 2003. Cf. also Chapter VI.2.3.
- 110 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 11 February 2004. This author had no access to exact figures as to the number of people belonging to the different brotherhoods. But the Rahmaniya, for instance, was said to count 50,000 members alone in one region of the wilaya of Djelfa, cf. *Le Matin*, 6 October 2003.
- 111 Cf. *Le Matin*, 6 October 2003; *L'Expression*, 23 October 2003; *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 11 February 2004.
- 112 Many of the large Algerian NGOs fall into what Sheila Carapico calls GO-NGOs, or government-organized NGOs (Carapico 2000).
- 113 Own translation.
- 114 The prohibition on alcohol imports (Art. 42 of the Loi de finances 2004) and an amendment of the election law, abolishing separate and non-independently controlled voting in army barracks.
- 115 The FFS and the PT.
- 116 The Islamist Ennahda (that later split; its spin-off, MRN, took a more contesting line) and MSP, as well as the Berberophone radically secular RCD.
- 117 In a surprise move, the senate did not block this law but approved it with the controversial article. This could be explained with the upcoming presidential elections in which no force, not even the dominantly secular RND, wanted to alienate the Islamist electorate.
- 118 Roberts (2002a: 26) termed these contesters 'participationist opposition', as opposed to 'programmatic opposition'. Roberts' terminology is not used here because actors such as the RCD party in 2004 oscillated between the two and were better described with the broader term 'semi-contesters'.
- 119 For post-1992 strategies of Islamist charities, cf. Volpi (2003: 98–103).
- 120 Ibrahim, the son of Oulémas founder Bachir Ibrahim, could be better described as an Arabo-nationalist. He had long been a regime insider, and as minister of education under Boumedienne he had initiated the Arabization of the school system.

- 121 According to the constitutional council Ibrahim fell 1,000 signatures short of the 75,000 required for a valid candidacy. Ibrahim, however, insisted that he had handed in 94,000 signatures, cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 8 March 2004.
- 122 In the 2004 presidential pre-election campaign, for instance, Djabballah accused his potential rival Ibrahim of 'un-Islamic behaviour' because the latter was a declared fan of jazz music and his wife did not wear a veil; cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 14 August 2003.
- 123 After their release they were stripped of their active and passive political rights and, among other things, barred from making public appearances. Abassi Madani was allowed to leave for Malaysia shortly after his release.
- 124 The FIS leadership in Algeria decided to wait with its endorsement for the second round – which never took place – in order to see whether the elections would indeed be free. However, one of the FIS leaders in exile, Rabah Kebir, endorsed Bouteflika; cf. *Le Jeune Indépendant*, 24 March 2004. This testified to the strong divergences within the organization.
- 125 Cf. *Al-Hayat*, 15 November 2003.
- 126 The divergences within the movement became clear at a semi-clandestine FIS congress held in Belgium in August 2002; cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 7 August 2002, *L'Expression*, 21 August and 1 September 2002.
- 127 On issues related to Algeria's social order and cultural identity, e.g. the family code or the education sector reforms, there was little to no divergence between conservatives within the FLN and most Islamist parties.
- 128 The affair of thirty-two kidnapped European tourists in spring 2003 proved quite a challenge to this strategy, for on the one hand core and second circle elites wanted to portray Algeria as a country that had defeated terrorism, while on the other hand it was a prime opportunity to place Algeria on the post 9/11 map of 'victims of international terrorism'. As a result, the Algerian regime's initial reaction was complete cacophony and a wild manoeuvring between denial that the tourists had been kidnapped and allegations that the kidnappers were steered by foreign hands, i.e. by al-Qa'ida; cf. *El Watan*, 27 April 2003 and 18 May, *Le Monde* 28 April 2003, *Le Quotidien* and *El Moudjahid*, 6 May 2003, *L'Expression*, 6 May and 8 May 2003.
- 129 Hanoune was also one of the six presidential candidates in 2004. Of all candidates she did the poorest with 0.63 per cent of the vote.
- 130 The PT was against such inquiries and for participation in the elections.
- 131 *Aârch*, pl. *aârouch*, in classical Arabic means 'throne'. In Maghrebi Arabic it is used for 'tribes' but also to refer to specific traditional forms of social organization at the local level.
- 132 The Kabyle political landscape was already deeply divided between adherents of the strongly competing FFS and the RCD. A third political group was the Mouvement pour l'Autonomie de la Kabylie (MAK) of former RCD member Ferhat M'Henni. This movement, which in 2004 appeared to command little popular backing, was the only political force in Algeria to openly demand autonomy for the Kabyles.
- 133 The most prominent of these coordinations was the Coordination des Aârouch, des Dairas et des Communes (CADC). The CADC was an umbrella organization consisting of different local and regional committees, including revitalized (or reinvented) traditional village committees, Groupes de Légitime Défense (groups armed by the state to defend villages against armed Islamists), newly founded urban neighbourhood committees and administrative district committees.
- 134 This was not just a pre-electoral concession: had the governing elites refused to give Tamazight this status, it would have further reduced their legitimacy and raised repression costs for the state. The Berber movement, however, wanted the Tamazight to become not only a national but an official language, i.e. one of

- public administration – a virtually impossible claim since this language did not exist in a modern standard form but consisted of several dialects which remained unwritten.
- 135 For details, cf. ICG (2003: 26ff).
- 136 Many young Berbers viewed someone like the thirty-something Belaïd Abrika, one of the CADC's imprisoned leaders, as more capable at enunciating their socio-economic and political discontent and championing their identity claims than figures such as (the twice as old) FFS leader Hocine Aït-Ahmed or the RCD's Said Sadi, which were considered to belong to the political establishment (interview with two leaders of the CADC, 3 March 2003).
- 137 This was true particularly during elections. Several FFS cadres told this author that they never reached the voting booths because Molotov cocktails were thrown at them (interview, 17 October 2003).
- 138 Many of the FIS' core demands like social justice, the removal from power of what was seen as a completely corrupt incumbent elite and an end to the mismanagement of state resources, were similar to those of the CADC.
- 139 For the complex internal structures of this movement, cf. ICG (2003: 17ff.).
- 140 In September 2003 a state commission to research the fate of the disparus was finally installed. *Le Monde* (25 September 2003) interpreted this as a sign that the authorities were admitting a certain responsibility for the disappearance of these people.
- 141 Cf. Amnesty International (2003: 2).
- 142 Interviews with army officers who wished to remain anonymous (March 2002) and with a legal adviser to several generals (17 January 2002).
- 143 SOS Disparus was such a case.
- 144 Cf., for instance, *El Youm*, 10 November 2003. In one case, a journalist and human rights activist was condemned to a six-month prison sentence for defamation after he had uncovered that thirteen babies had died in a hospital through medical negligence; cf. Reporters sans Frontières, press release, 28 May 2004.
- 145 Among the newer of these organizations was the RND-backed Association Algérienne pour la Promotion de la Citoyenneté et les Droits de l'Homme, which clearly had no interest in defending the rights of Islamists. Cf. also Harbi (1992: 215) for the formation of such human rights groups and the different currents in the human right field in the 1980s and early 1990s.
- 146 US secretary of state Colin Powell, on a visit to Algeria in December 2003, explicitly stressed the need for free and fair elections and implicitly referred to human rights by stressing that the US were taking into account all the letters they had received from NGOs. After the American invasion of Iraq, several comments in the Algerian press stressed the need to pre-empt such potential action in Algeria by building a democracy and establishing the rule of law (cf. *Le Matin*, 23 April 2003).
- 147 The SNAPAP, for instance, claimed that it had 400,000 members, i.e. 20 per cent of all workers in areas where the SNAPAP was active (it was barred from certain sectors such as state industries and the police). This figure appeared to be exaggerated, and formal membership figures in several other unions were still low – not least because any strong engagement could prompt repressive measures. Informal support, however, was strong and growing, judging from the number of people who followed their strikes (cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 14 December 2003).
- 148 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 7 October 2003.
- 149 Cf. *Le Monde*, 3 December 2003.
- 150 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 11 November 2003.
- 151 www.rsf.org. Freedom House rated the Algerian press as 'non-free' in 2002, 2004 and 2004 and put it behind the Moroccan – a questionable categorization because it was based primarily on (legalistic) indicators such as the number of

- journalists arrested, the number of newspapers suspended, etc. A thorough content analysis would have most likely given Algeria's press with its few taboos a better ranking in 2002 and 2003.
- 152 However, investigating embezzlement and links between business and terrorism, especially on the local level, remained extremely dangerous (cf. *Liberté*, 23 July 2002). Government influence was also exercised indirectly, for instance, through intervention in advertising policies of state enterprises.
- 153 Cf. Rebah (2002).
- 154 In 1998, for instance, a press campaign pushed General Mohamed Betchine, a strong and utterly corrupt Zeroual man, to resign – heralding the end of the Zeroual era. It is, however, unlikely that the press was acting entirely on its own. Rather, it was used by Betchine's foes to dispose of him.
- 155 Cf., for instance, a column in *El Watan* (14 July 2003) completely ridiculing Mohamed Lamari and Smail Lamari, questioning their competence.
- 156 *Le Matin* ran huge headlines against Bouteflika almost daily: for instance, 'Monsieur Annan, l'homme que vous allez recevoir est un dictateur' (Mr Annan, the man you are going to receive is a dictator) (20 September 2003) or 'Bouteflika veut sa république islamique' (Bouteflika wants his Islamic republic) (20 October 2003).
- 157 Cf. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 1 March 2004, pp. 7–8.
- 158 Proof of such links was hard to come by, but army insiders such as ex-DRS top officer, Mohamed Samraoui, insisted that *Le Matin*, *Liberté* (owned by Rebrab) and *Le Soir d'Algérie* were papers with close ties to the intelligence services (interview, December 2003 in Germany).
- 159 Several Algerian journalists reported that their editors-in-chief would tell them 'Si Khaled' (Nezzar) or 'Si Larbi' (Belkheir) called and suggested to publish or not publish this or that (interview, 16 October and 17 October 2002).
- 160 Cf. *El Moudjahid*, 6 May 2003.
- 161 In the early 2000s, there existed only a few sensitive issues on which this author rarely or never saw an article; one was corruption in Sonatrach; another was articles exclusively on the DRS (ex-Sécurité Militaire) – though the services were increasingly being referred to in general terms.
- 162 The newspaper with the largest circulation, *El Khabar*, was in the Arabic language, but was reputed to be close to Lamari and hence presented no real threat to the military elites. While it was hostile to Bouteflika, it was more moderate in tone than other papers.
- 163 The Mouvement Démocratique et Social even decided not to participate in elections as long as Islamist parties were allowed to participate (cf. *Le Matin*, 24 January 2002). This party thus had a vision of 'democracy' that would have excluded a substantial part of the Algerian electorate.
- 164 For the principles guiding the democrats, cf. their Charte des républicains, published in *Liberté*, 5/6 December 2003.
- 165 For an impressive account of the RCD's democracy deficits, cf. Roberts (2001).
- 166 Brahimi made no secret of his direct access to some generals (interview, 17 January 2002).

V The emergence of a new elite generation: recruitment mechanisms and elite types

- 1 Another term common in Algerian political discourse, 'la génération de Novembre 54', designated the initiators of the armed resistance to France in 1954 only. By 2004, all but two of these revolutionary leaders had passed away.

- 2 Cf. *The New York Review of Books*, 3 July 2003.
- 3 Cf. *El Moudjahid*, 1 October 2003. Own translation.
- 4 Cf. for instance *Al-Hayat*, 13 November 2003.
- 5 Semi-structured three- to four-hour interviews were conducted with fifty-one politically relevant actors from the third generation, twenty-one from the second generation, and twenty-eight from the first generation. Twelve of the hundred interviewees were women (this proportion was high compared to overall representation of women in the PRE; in the 2002 parliament, for instance, twenty-four of 388 MPs were female). Roughly a third of the interviewees belonged to the second circle of the elite, the rest to the third circle. None of the interviewees belonged to the first circle. However, ex-core elite members also belonged to those interviewed.
- 6 Cf. *El Moudjahid*, 26 August 2002.
- 7 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 19 November 2002.
- 8 In 1997, 7 per cent of RND MPs came from the third generation; in 2002, this number climbed to 21.3 per cent. Even if one took into account that five years had passed and all generations had grown older, this meant an overall rejuvenation of RND MPs.
- 9 Several high-profile MPs of the RND were dropped in favour of new, usually young unknown candidates. Whether this was a strategy to prevent the accumulation of legislative know-how, or whether this was simply a side-effect of rejuvenation, or a result of both, was difficult to judge.
- 10 Général-major ranked above a general and was the second-highest rank in Algeria. The highest was Général de corps d'armée, a rank that had only been awarded to Mohamed Lamari.
- 11 Kamel Abderrahmane (2nd military region), Ahcène Tafer (3rd region), Abdelmadjid Saheb (4th region), Ali Benali (6th region).
- 12 Mohamed Benslimane, Brahim Dadci, Ahmed Boustila and Ahmed Senhadji.
- 13 This at the time widespread rumour was confirmed by two well-informed diplomats (interviews, 2 October 2002 and 29 October 2002).
- 14 This regulation had been designed in the 1970s to dispose of those top cadres discreetly by offering them the full benefits of retirement, even if they were only in their forties (cf. Hidouci 1995: 95).
- 15 Since these ministers generally belonged to the second generation, they tended to recruit their advisers from the third generation.
- 16 Nourani was instrumental in forbidding and trying to prevent the FLN congress at which Benflis, in defiance of the prohibition, was declared presidential candidate; cf. *El Watan*, 2 October 2003.
- 17 Interestingly, Camau and Geisser (2003: 259) detected similar patterns when looking at opposition elites in Tunisia. They write that in order to be an opposition member in Tunisia one had to belong to the social elite to begin with, because only certain socially and family well-connected and placed socio-professional elites could afford – at least for a certain period – to pay the price of being repressed.
- 18 The trends and patterns found in this sample also strongly corresponded with this author's analysis of data gathered from the media on young elites with high visibility who had not been included in the sample of interviewees.
- 19 These military entrepreneurs were rewarded for their services during the war with property left behind by the colonizers, for instance agricultural enterprises, cf. Martinez (2000: 24). They soon became the pre-eminent businessmen in their communities.
- 20 With two notable exceptions: the ministry of religious affairs, where Arabic indeed was the primary working language, and the legal field, because the language used in court was Arabic.

- 21 A lawyer, working as an adviser for Benflis, told this author that of the roughly one hundred graduates from his class that were arabisants, only two (one of them being himself) had made it into the higher echelons of the system, both of them because they had undertaken additional studies in a French-speaking country.
- 22 In many cases they were not even translated. A top cadre in an independent union in the health sector showed this author the correspondence between his union and the health ministry: it was entirely in French, with the exception of one cover letter.
- 23 In questionnaires Standard Arabic was often given as their primary language, both written and spoken. When the question of their primary language came up during an interview, the answer was usually quite different. Algerian psychologist Tchirine Mekidèche gave this author a plausible explanation for this phenomenon: questionnaires reminded interviewees of official documents and since anything official had to be in Standard Arabic, they put 'Standard Arabic' as their mother tongue to be on the safe side. Cf. also Taleb-Ibrahimi (1993; 2001).
- 24 Cf. Chapter IV, n.126.
- 25 When Antar Zouabri, the head of the GIA, was killed in early 2002, most of the Algerian press presented him – whether true or not – as the son of a harki; cf. www.algeria-interface.com, 22 March 2002. This author happened to know an ex-teacher of Zouabri, who claimed that there was no truth to these allegations.
- 26 When Leila Hammou Boutlilis, a second-generation elite, was appointed minister of scientific research, the state media stressed her being the offspring of a famous chahid (martyr) much more prominently than her being a well-known professor of cardiology.
- 27 For instance, the RND MP Noureddine Benbraham, president of the Scouts, and the FLN MP Abdelaziz Belaid, president of the UNJA.
- 28 Of three members of the UNJA executive interviewed in April 2002, by October 2002 one had become an advisor to a minister, one president of the elected council for a large Algiers neighbourhood, and one had managed to get re-elected to parliament even though more than 80 per cent of former MPs were not re-elected.
- 29 Cf. al-Saidawi (2000).
- 30 Interviews with retired generals Benyelles (3 March 2002) and Taright (29 October 2002).
- 31 Belkheir came from the west, the two Lamaris were both born in Algiers, and both Mediène and Touati were Kabyles (i.e. from the east).
- 32 A third-generation industrialist, owning a factory with roughly seventy employees, complained to this author that it was virtually impossible to mount an enterprise that depended on imported (raw) materials or capital goods without a nod from the services that controlled imports. When this author wanted to meet this industrialist a second time for a follow-up on these allegations, he declined and stated between the lines that he was afraid to do so.
- 33 Interviews with several ex-prime ministers and ministers (September and October 2002).
- 34 One (young) second-generation adviser of Bouteflika – with an extremely solid record in his field and who neither came from the 'right' region (the west) nor from a Francophone or revolutionary background – said concerning his recruitment: 'They have plenty of people here who were recruited for reasons other than qualifications so they need a few who can actually do the work' (interview, 9 October 2002).
- 35 Interviews with General Taright, with two army officers who wished to remain anonymous and with two journalists working on the army (October 2003).

- 36 The janvieriste Abdelmadjid Taright made a particular point of his and his colleagues' professionalism compared to their moudjahidine predecessors (interview, 29 October 2002).
- 37 Benflis, who was ten when the war started, lost both his brother and father in the war.
- 38 This author was not able to obtain absolute numbers, because scholarships were given by various ministries as well as enterprises such as Sonatrach. However, Entelis (1983: 104) spoke of 2,500 Algerian students in 1977–8 at US colleges alone, most of whom presumably had state scholarships.
- 39 Roberts (2003: 12), however, rightly pointed out that the pace and extent of Arabization of the school system by far exceeded that of the public sphere and by the mid- to late 1970s job opportunities for arabisants had become scarce.
- 40 Interlocutors of this generation, with the exception of a few Islamists, communists and Berber activists, had at one time or another in their youth and often beyond it belonged to one of these mass organizations.
- 41 Interview with a top cadre in the interior ministry (11 February 2002).
- 42 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 17 December 2002.
- 43 In the 1990s private schools experienced a comeback even though they were not officially recognized. According to *El Khabar* (16 September 2003), more than 25,000 Algerian children had attended private schools from 1990 onward. In autumn 2003, private schools were legalized again.
- 44 Algeria participated in the Pentagon's International Military Education and Training Program (IMET) as of the 1980s.
- 45 The UNEA, from 1975 to 1990 part of the UNJA, in strong contrast to all other state-organizations during the parti unique era had a tense relationship with state authorities (cf. Faath 1990: 129).
- 46 Éradicateurs were opposed to dialogue with the FIS (and often generally with Islamists), and instead favoured brutal repression; réconciliateurs were favourable of dialogue and an (political) agreement with the FIS.
- 47 Francophone and Arabophone mean an affinity, orientation and identification towards the French and Arabic cultures respectively. Arabisant(s) and francisant(s) relate to the linguistic orientation of a person (group) only, though affinity and language spoken, obviously, tend to overlap.
- 48 Cf. for instance *Le Monde*, 19 September 2003.
- 49 Background not only included social 'class' origin, but also socio-cultural components such as language milieu (francisant or arabisant) as well as party affiliation; information given by individual elites was supplemented by data collected on these elites and their families from other elites and/or well-informed media sources.
- 50 Family, school, occupation, political group, mass organizations and associations were taken as agents for socialization. The nature of an individual's socialization was determined not only based on information given by interviewees but also based on information on the nature of their specific agents of socialization gathered from a number of other sources.
- 51 This question addressed attitudes vis-à-vis a proposal for education reforms presented by a presidential commission in March 2001 and fiercely contested, mainly because of the strong weight given to foreign languages (French, primarily) and, to a lesser degree, because of the weight given to the teaching of civil and universal values rather than to religious ones.
- 52 For the Weberian connotation of ideal-types, cf. Chapter II, n. 68.
- 53 Interview, 28 January 2002. Cited initials do not correspond with an individual's real name.
- 54 The interview with A.B. took place in the headquarters of the mass movement and was preceded by video-presentations on events organized by the movement and by a long tour of the building, during which A.B. was particularly proud to

- point out a flag of North Korea's youth league handed over to one of his colleagues by Kim Il Sung. When it came to answering questions, however, A.B. was not particularly forthcoming. He came to the interview with several advisers, asked them to answer questions he seemed to consider uncomfortable, and had his secretary fill in the questionnaire regarding his family background.
- 55 The Chaouis were the second-largest Berber tribe after the Kabyles.
- 56 Abdallah Djaballah, the leader of the MRN, the most radical legal Islamist party, did not fall (squarely) into the category of neo-revolutionaries, and, moreover, belonged to the second generation. Similarly Ali Belhadj was a neo-revolutionaries from the second generation, and it was questionable whether he could still be counted in the PRE in 2004.
- 57 Interview, 3 March 2002.
- 58 The interview with C.D., who was concerned about possible surveillance, at the suggestion of this author took place in the compound of a Catholic missionary order in Tizi Ouzou, a place considered off-limits for those surveying all of C.D.'s moves.
- 59 For the contents of this platform, cf. Chapter IV, n. 28.
- 60 Kateb Yacine (1929–89) was a famous (perhaps the most famous) Algerian writer.
- 61 For instance, C.D. and his colleagues managed to wrest the annulling of the 2002 election results in Kabylia.
- 62 This secular but not a priori anti-Islamist youth organization, which was somewhat close to the FFS, was dedicated to mobilizing young people on human rights and social issues. In the mid-1990s it staged courageous and quite large anti-regime demonstrations but had lost momentum by the end of the decade.
- 63 Cf. Chapter IV, n. 103.
- 64 As Przeworski (1991: 68) rightly pointed out, moderates (the radical democrat, in this case) and radicals (the neo-revolutionaries, in this case) may not necessarily represent different interests, but differ in their risk aversion, expressed in their choices and the means they use to achieve their goals.
- 65 Interview, 24 March 2002. The interview with E.F. took place in one of the union's main offices in a run-down tenement building in the Algiers suburb of Bab Ezzouar.
- 66 Malek Bennabi's (1905–73) core message was that Islam was the weapon for successful combat against Algeria's technological backwardness. He also preached opposition to what he called 'occidental materialism'. Bennabi, who had left his job as director at the ministry of higher education in 1967, until his death held seminars at his home for high school and university students, many of whom later became (militant) Islamist activists.
- 67 The MSP party, in which many Islamist reformers could be found, had not signed the Platform of Rome – which would have laid the foundations for a democratic Algeria including the FIS – presumably because the MSP feared the competition from Islamists who chose to fight the existing political order from outside the system, or who had one foot in the system but had resisted co-optation.
- 68 Interviews (28 January 2002 and 21 October 2002). The two interviews with G.H., one of them lasting over four hours, both took place in his office in parliament. While very polite, he did not waste any time on conversational preludes to the interview but asked a few precise questions about the author's framework of research.
- 69 Three of the interview partners who fell into the category of nationalist reformers and who this author ran into repeatedly on social occasions asked her not to tell their wives that she had seen them drinking.

- 70 Cf., for instance, 'Algeria – country assistance strategy public information notice', PIN 94, 1 August 2003, Washington, DC: World Bank.
- 71 Interview, 5 March 2002 and 9 October 2002. J.K., who was on a fast career track, already occupied the second such position and was extremely worried about having his identity revealed. Hence, no further details on his formal position – the highest of all prototypes presented here – are given. J.K. was hesitant to give an interview, even though he knew the interviewing researcher from social occasions. When he finally agreed to the first interview, he conceded only fifteen minutes and asked his assistants to be present during the interview, which took place in his impressive office overlooking the Bay of Algiers. Once he realized that the discussion would not circle around what he considered uncomfortable issues – the *Qui tue qui?* debate, for instance – he sent his entourage away and spoke for over an hour.
- 72 The PAGS (Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste), the clandestine Algerian communist party, had been very active at universities during the single-party system; while it suffered clamp-downs in certain periods, it became somewhat tolerated by the regime in others.

VI Factors structuring elite corridors of action

- 1 That is, the little-urbanized, little or non-Francophone, conservative Algeria.
- 2 This author was invited to accompany Ali Benflis on this trip and all information given regarding the trip was experienced first hand.
- 3 Interview (14 October 2002).
- 4 'Strongmen' in Migdal's (1988: 33ff.) understanding are 'chiefs, landlords, bosses, rich peasants, clan leaders, zaims', etc., who resist state predominance but on whom state leaders nevertheless have to rely because the strongmen offer viable survival strategies for their social group and thus command over much local influence and support (Migdal 2001: 69).
- 5 Interview (31 October 2002) with Zine Eddine Youbi, Ministre de la Poste et des Technologies de l'information et de la communication, who had to postpone the interview with this author three times because of short notice travels by the president.
- 6 Interestingly, several interviewees referred to Boumedienne as 'the father' – in some cases ironically, in others not.
- 7 The literal translation of *zaïm* in its modern usage is leader of a movement or a political party. The term is, however, used primarily to describe strong and charismatic national leaders, such as those dominant in the first decades of post-colonial Arab nationalism, and notably the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser.
- 8 For an interesting account of Kabyle elites between modernization and retraditionalization, cf. Salhi (2002).
- 9 Cf. *Le Matin*, 10 October 2002.
- 10 Two delegates of the CADC, the largest coordination, attributed the absence of women to the traditional structure of some of the coordinations' suborganizations and to a mentality that had 'penetrated' the movement through these organizations. These delegates said they personally regretted the absence of women and expressed the hope that the 'problem will be solved in one or two generations' (interview, 3 March 2002).
- 11 Cf. ICG (2003: 21) where a Tizi Ouzou resident is quoted as saying: 'We have lived under the dictatorship of terror. Now we live under the dictatorship of the aarsh.'
- 12 Abrika was not only fiercely rebellious in his rhetoric but also quite unconventional in his looks: he wore his hair long and was soon nicknamed 'Jésus' by the population and the press alike.

- 13 Own translation.
- 14 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 1 April 2004.
- 15 Weber (1973: 483ff.) saw this form of leadership as emanating from the religious sphere, and characterized it as a specific, not everyday (außeralltägliche) purely personal social relationship, based among other things on 'faith' and 'recognition' of the 'carrier of the charisma' (Charismaträger) as a duty.
- 16 The FIS had been one of the few parties deviating from this pattern; it de facto had a double leadership with Abassi Madani, its official number one, more in the role of the charismatic father figure and with Ali Belhadj, the party's number two, being the charismatic rebel.
- 17 A prominent example was the RCD's Khalida Messaoudi Toumi who fell out with Sadi over, among other things, the question of whether or not to resign from government in the wake of the Kabyle uprisings. Toumi later became minister in the second Benflis government.
- 18 These MPs were led by Labib Adami who was the brother of the minister of justice at the time. Adami opposed Djaballah's candidacy in the 1999 presidential elections, presumably for reasons linked to his family's ties to the core elite.
- 19 The FFS had since 1963 fought for a democracy and was not only comparable to European social democratic parties but also was a prime Algerian interlocutor of the latter. In 1995 it was a driving force behind the Platform of Rome, which opted for a transitional government including the FIS and for free elections.
- 20 In addition to his revolutionary legitimacy, Aït-Ahmed, coming from a prominent and wealthy marabout-family, also had religious capital.
- 21 Interview (17 October 2002) with an ex-member of the executive who wished to remain anonymous.
- 22 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 2 August 2003.
- 23 *Liberté*, 8 August and 24 August 2002, ran a whole series of caricatures revolving around the FFS waiting for instructions from Lausanne.
- 24 A Tizi Ouzou local party cadre was evicted from the party after publicly criticizing the party's executive; cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 2 August 2003.
- 25 Abdelhamid Mehri (1989 to 1996), who had steered the party into the opposition, who had signed the Platform of Rome and who was, thereafter, virtually evicted by forces close to the core elite; Boualem Benhamouda (1996 to 2001), who brought the party closer to the core elite; and Ali Benflis (since 2001), who brought the party back to glory but also into conflict with a part of the core elite (Belkheir and Bouteflika).
- 26 *Le Matin*, 19 March 2003 and 16 April 2003.
- 27 Interview (28 October 2002) with Ouyahia. RND MPs and an RND mayor in interviews (23 January and 2 March 2002) cited these qualities as presenting the big difference from other party leaders.
- 28 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 26 August 2002. Though this move was not contrary to party statutes that gave Ouyahia the right to appoint a certain quota, it undermined the RND's claims that its leader had no ambitions of extending his powers.
- 29 Cf. *Le Matin*, 8 August 2003; *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 9 August 2003.
- 30 Roberts (2002b: 20) speaks of 'obsessive insistence on "collective leadership" in Kabylia'.
- 31 Vatiokis (1972: 312) argues that soon after independence, 'given the traditional setting of Algerian society', a supremacy became evident of the 'za'im mass oriented militant leader over the more constrained intellectual type represented by the earlier nationalist leader', for instance Ferhat Abbas, who was more inclined towards power-sharing and collective leadership.
- 32 Cf. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 13 April 2004.

- 33 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 14 January 2004.
- 34 Official Algerian figures speak of 1 million Algerian victims. Stora (1995: 91) puts the overall number of French and Algerian victims of the war at 500,000, of whom the overwhelming majority were Algerians. During the war, moreover, over 2 million Algerian farmers were uprooted and relocated by the French in an effort to gain control of the anti-colonial resistance (cf. Ageron 1991: 119).
- 35 Cf. Martinez (2000) for empirical evidence; also ICG (2001: 11).
- 36 As of 2002 there were rumours that Mezrag, who had gone into business, had political ambitions. In the 2002 election campaigns some parties put amnestied ex-fighters, so-called repentis (repentants), on their election lists. Ennahda's parliamentary election lists allegedly were headed in nineteen cases by ex-FIS and ex-AIS members. Most of these persons were excluded, although on grounds other than being repentis, for this did not present a legal obstacle; cf. *Daily Star*, 19 March 2002; *El-Youm*, 24 November 2001; *Le Matin*, 28 April 2002; *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 16 February 2002.
- 37 An Algerian businessman, who was a top executive in a large German enterprise and who advocated democratic reforms in Algeria, in early 2004 told this author without qualms that the first step in a solution to Algeria's problems was to 'physically liquidate Bouteflika'.
- 38 The minister of culture and communication, Khalida Messaoudi Toumi, in 2004 stated that it took her forty years to understand that democracy was the best of all forms of government but also the most difficult. Asked whether dictatorship would be easier, she stated: 'No, it is easier to take to the weapons' (Weltwoche, 21 April 2004).
- 39 Though leaders of the Kabyle coordinations claimed to be against the use of force (interviews 3 March 2002), they tolerated destruction of property, such as local offices of the FFS or public buildings. They were being accused of doing so not only by the authorities but also by regular citizens (on trips by this author to Tizi Ouzou in February and March 2002).
- 40 Sadi's anti-regime discourse became increasingly radical as the Kabyle insurgency progressed. Similar developments could be seen among so-called democratic forces, such as ex-HCE member Redha Malek or human rights activist Miloud Brahimi, who strongly supported the Kabyle protest movement.
- 41 This was true at least in the initial phases of the Kabyle uprising, before the coordinations fell out with the FFS. Several FFS cadres in interviews in early 2002 stressed their hope that they could 'politicize and channel the uprising' in order for it to promote the goals of the FFS.
- 42 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 28 March 2004.
- 43 The caricaturist Dilem, for instance, titled one of his drawings 'Boutef, the president who wants to become king', and had two Algerians say to each other, 'we are not against it' and 'we even prepared a crown for him' – this crown, however, turned out to be a wreath with a bandana saying: 'Rest in peace.' Cf. *Liberté*, 18 July 2002. Own translation.
- 44 Cf. ICG (2003: 15).
- 45 This is also what Bouteflika called journalists from newspapers hostile to him, cf. *Le Monde*, 2 April 2004.
- 46 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 10 March 2004.
- 47 In spring 2002 huge graffiti on a wall on the main road leading into Tizi Ouzou from Algiers said: 'Délégués Taiwan = harkis.' These so-called Taiwan delegates (in allusion to Taiwan's dissidence from China) were leaders of various coordinations who had been willing to negotiate with the government without preconditions in late 2001 and early 2002.

- 48 The notion of a liberation war won 'with an ocean of blood and tears' was, as Ruf (1997: 59) among others pointed out, not doing justice to the complexity of factors that eventually brought independence.
- 49 In an election broadcast on Algerian TV, 18 March 2004.
- 50 Interview with Benflis (14 October 2002).
- 51 The RND and the FLN signed every official statement (such as campaign programmes) with sentences such as 'Eternity and glory to our brave martyrs'.
- 52 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 18 June 2003.
- 53 In the absence of any study focusing on the genesis and use of the term *le pouvoir*, it was not possible to precisely track the history and use of the term in the Algerian context. The Algerian historian Daho Djerbal, however, told this author that the term first surfaced in Algerian political discourse in the early 1960s when Algeria was about to gain its sovereignty and when internal conflicts between different political fractions over legitimate authority began to surface.
- 54 All these allegations were made in interviews with members of the PRE.
- 55 This was, for instance, the case in the Palestinian Territories in which this author spent a year in the late 1990s.
- 56 In interviews (27 January 2002 and 19 February 2002).
- 57 For instance, Ahmed Benbitour (interview, 14 February 2002); Mahfoudh Nahnah (interview, 26 January 2002).
- 58 Several MPs interviewed, including MPs from the FLN and RND, hinted at pressure from outside their parliamentary faction before voting sessions. MPs of the Islamist MSP were most outspoken about this but still preferred to do so off the record. Such pressure, or just the fear of it, could for instance serve to better understand why FLN MPs who were loyal to Benflis, even at the height of the conflict between Benflis and Bouteflika, to the surprise of observers unanimously approved all the latter's ordinances in a parliamentary vote. Cf. *Le Matin*, 7 October 2003.
- 59 For an excellent account, cf. Hidouci 1995.
- 60 A telling example from the early 1990s was recounted by former prime minister Belaïd Abdesselam in 2003. In 1993 he was asked for advice by the president of the HCE, Ali Kafi, and by Khaled Nezzar. During the meeting the idea popped up that Abdesselam should become prime minister: 'They said: take the government, and I did.' This example showed that two people belonging to a collective body, the HCE, that *nota bene* had several additional members, on the spur of the moment and completely informally decided who would be the next prime minister. Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 20 October 2003.
- 61 Interview (3 March 2002). In the case of the generals Nezzar and Mediène, get-togethers were easy to arrange: the two had adjacent villas, with a gate in the wall separating their houses.
- 62 Interview (14 February 2002). Benbitour also gave a prime example of the cabinet being completely bypassed in strategic decision-making. Bouteflika had asked prime minister Benbitour to present reform proposals for the economy and had the latter brief him regularly on progress made. Bouteflika, according to Benbitour, seemed to approve of the line taken. However, one day, out of the blue, Benbitour received a presidential ordinance for the relaunching of economic reforms that contained the 'complete opposite' of what Benbitour had suggested – Benbitour immediately resigned.
- 63 Ritualized answers such as Allah karim (God is generous), insha'allah (if God wishes) or al-hamdu-l'llah (praise be to God) generally serve to avoid giving specific answers.
- 64 MSP cadres, for instance, though participating in government, could excuse unpopular government policies that ran contrary to their agenda with not belonging to the *pouvoir*.

- 65 Several cadres of the FFS and RCD (interviews February and March 2002) made such allegations.
- 66 Cf., for instance, *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 21 February 2002, 25 September 2003 and 9 October 2003.
- 67 Benflis got 6.42 per cent and Sadi 1.94 per cent of the valid votes cast, while Bouteflika, the winner, received 84.99 per cent.
- 68 That is, they were undertaken between individuals or networks of individuals in a vertical fashion. The interaction on which they were based was marked by 'simultaneous exchange of different types of resources' – an exchange that included a 'package deal'. Moreover, 'long-term credit and obligations' were built into these relations that featured 'strong elements of inequality and power indifference' but also of solidarity.
- 69 Cf. *El Moudjahid*, 28 August 2002. The fact that so many mayors were convicted could be taken as an indicator of enforcement of the rule of law. Yet in a number of cases these legal proceedings appeared to be related primarily to local intra-elite struggles and were a way of getting rid of an (economic) rival. Also, in several cases in which journalists did provide substantial evidence on corruption involving local politicians and administrators, the journalists were the ones being jailed or were physically attacked (cf. *Liberté*, 23 June 2002; *Le Monde*, 11 December 2002; *Le Matin*, 16 January 2003).
- 70 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 14 October 2003.
- 71 A successful young businessman and head of an NGO involved in sustainable development in early 2002 stated that he was negotiating with both the RND and the FLN – to neither of which he belonged prior to the pre-election campaign – over a top list place, and was confident to get one because he had 'money to spend' (interview, 12 February 2002).
- 72 A.L. actually agreed to have his full name mentioned, but since he was not a top elite and is being used here as an example for what are in some cases dubious practices, his full name is withheld.
- 73 The portrait of A.L. was based on information given by him (interviews 14 January, 27 January, 5 February, 23 September and 12 October 2002), on information gathered by acquaintances of his, by foreign diplomats and representatives of foreign organizations who either knew him well or had engaged in joint projects with his company. Finally, this author observed A.L.'s interactions with Algerian top elites, including décideurs, at numerous formal receptions.
- 74 This author tried to find out who pushed the nomination of A.L., because he was not an obvious candidate judging from the selection criteria published by the World Economic Forum (WEF). However, with the whole nomination process being handled in a secretive way and members of the nominating committee remaining anonymous this was not possible. Since A.L. was not an internationally known or very well-connected businessman before his nomination, and since applications were collected from external sources as well as from 'members of the WEF and its broad constituencies' (www.weforum.org/glt), it could be assumed that A.L. had been pushed by top Algerian economic and/or political elites who expected 'returns' from his nomination and/or who were honouring him for services rendered.
- 75 When this author told him not to write something she had said 'in his reports to his friends, the generals', he jokingly retorted that he was too busy to report everything she said. Moreover, he enjoyed coquettishly pulling a picture out of his pocket showing himself and General Larbi Belkheir engaged in a discussion at a garden party.
- 76 This information came from two foreign organizations that had been engaged in joint projects with him. One of them claimed he had embezzled funds.

- 77 A.L. thus could – among other things – also be considered what Algerians called a *sous-marin*, a front-man who acted as a link between patrons (usually linked to the army) and foreign investors and who tended to negotiate commissions.
- 78 During the 1999 presidential campaign he had even been loosely involved in Taleb Ibrahimi's campaign – whether as a watchdog or out of conviction was difficult to determine.
- 79 This law was, among other things, to provide for competition in the hydrocarbon sector by ending Sontrach's monopoly over exploration and its supervision of the entire sector, cf. *Le Matin*, 15 October 2002; *El Moudjahid*, 21 October 2002.
- 80 In 2002, there were 57,000 associations (cf. *Le Matin*, 25 and 26 January 2002). With no academic research on the bulk of them, it was difficult to estimate how many were truly independent. Algerian researchers who were interviewed argued that an overwhelming majority of these were regime satellites and financed by parties and elites close to the regime. The fact that associations critical of the regime and/or those close to Islamist parties had extreme difficulties getting accredited supported such claims.
- 81 *Le Matin* in August 2003 ran a series of columns on networks surrounding Sonatrach. While there was some specific information on cronyism, most of the evidence had to be taken with a grain of salt since most articles appeared to be a campaign run by core or second circle elite members against Bouteflika and some of his allies.
- 82 Foreigners who had worked in the Algerian hydrocarbon sector, for instance, reported that OPEC-installed meters measuring output were frequently broken and that this was one way of diverting hydrocarbon revenues (interviews in Paris, 6 November 2003).
- 83 Information given by top officials in the Algerian public economic sector and by ex-government members suggested that both were the case (interviews in Paris, November 2003).
- 84 Cf., for instance, *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 11 August 2003.
- 85 Cf. Addi (1999: 174) or Martinez (2000: 124, n. 46) for descriptions of such networks. An example of such networks in a non-subsidized company was given by two foreign executives in a Sonatrach and British Petroleum joint venture (interview in Paris, 6 November 2003). In this company the Algerian head of human resources (most top positions in such joint ventures were doubly occupied, with an Algerian and a foreigner) every evening illegally collected the soft drinks that were available for free consumption in the entire compound, loaded them on to trucks with the co-operation of Algerian security personnel guarding the compound, and sold them at a price below regular retail prices to local grocery stores in the nearby city of Hassi Messaoud.
- 86 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 21 October 2003.
- 87 Cf. *Le Matin*, 15 July 2003; *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 8 September 2003.
- 88 Cf. *Le Matin*, 15. July 2003; *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 11 August 2003.
- 89 Cf. *Le Matin*, 6 August 2003.
- 90 Cf. *Le Matin*, 28 September 2003.
- 91 The private sector was also largely embedded in the above-described networks of exchange and as in the public sector 'string-pulling, protection and personal connections' in the bureaucracy decided whether a private enterprise succeeded (Liabès 1995: 201) – and not, for instance, innovative entrepreneurial skills.
- 92 It was remarkable, however, that a number of interview partners appeared not to perceive any contradiction between voiced reform and even good governance-convictions and semi- or illegal practices. A prime example of this was A.M., who was close to Mouloud Hamrouche, the prime minister who had

been so instrumental in the economic and political opening in 1989. A.M. was a former FLN top functionary and former director of the political science department of Algiers University who had profited from the early retirement statutes for cadres supérieurs and who had turned to business. A.M. gave this author a brilliant and detailed analysis of how corruption functioned in Algeria and how it needed to be fought. Only a few hours later, he approached this author with the idea of starting a small business together in Switzerland, 'a travel agency or something along those lines'. As it turned out – A.M. made no effort at concealing it – he was looking for someone to help him launder money. When asked how this went with his agenda of transparency, accountability, etc., he said that as long as the system functioned the way it did, it made no sense to play against 'the rules of the game' (interview, 20 March 2002).

- 93 Interview (19 February 2002).
- 94 Cf. Volpi (2003: 36–7, 98–103).
- 95 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 23 May 2002 and 11 September 2003.
- 96 Several interviewees alluded to this issue when asked what they found difficult about their privileged situation.
- 97 One former FFS top cadre told this author that he hesitated to fight for this aspect of his agenda, for he did not want his family – from whom he concealed that he secretly ate during Ramadan – to realize that he did not believe in God.
- 98 Interview (14 October 2002).
- 99 Cf. *Le Soir d'Algérie*, 15 January 2004; *Le Matin*, 6 June 2003, 27 July 2003 and 27 March 2004.
- 100 Roughly one in four interviewees, when asked about their family background, cited the name of their tribe and often added that it was 'une grande tribu', alluding to both size and influence.
- 101 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 23 May 2002.
- 102 Cf., for instance, *El Moudjahid*, 21 May 2002.
- 103 Interview (14 October 2002).
- 104 Of the seven presidents Algeria has had since independence, only the first, Ben Bella, and the most recent, Bouteflika, came from the west. Of the seventeen post-independence prime ministers, ten came from the east, three from the west, three from the centre and one from the south of the country; and of the eleven heads of the FLN, nine came from the east and two from the west.
- 105 Interviews with retired generals Rachid Benyelles (3 March 2002) and Abdelmadjid Taright (29 October 2002) and with an officer at the ministry of defence (12 October 2002).
- 106 Interview (20 February 2002).
- 107 A symbol of the strong regional sentiments was the fact that MPs in the ANP – with the partial exception of Islamists – tended to socialize at lunch not along party lines but along regional lines, i.e. all MPs from Batna, all from Jijel, etc. sat together.
- 108 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 1 October 2003.
- 109 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 30 September 2003.
- 110 For a good short history of the brotherhoods in colonial and post-colonial Algeria, see Hadj Ali (1992).
- 111 Several Islamists interviewed made derogatory remarks about the zaouïas and/or Sufism. Nevertheless, the Islamist MSP's leader Soltani himself was said to adhere to mystical practices; cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 10 August 2003. This indicated, not surprisingly, a mélange of local (sufi-) tradition and 'imported' Islamism, even within the Islamist camp.
- 112 In July 1991, after the general strike of the FIS and the ensuing confrontations, the national association of zaouïas issued a statement saying that they would engage themselves 'to fight against all those who in the name of wahabism,

- chi'ism and all other imported rituals, have tried or are trying to introduce deviations of the malekite ritual which is the common denominator among the majority of our people' (Hadj Ali 1992: 67, own translation).
- 113 Cf. *L'Expression*, 23 October 2003.
- 114 This was the case with the president of the national association of the zaouïas, Cheikh Chentouf Ben Abdallah, in the 1991 legislative elections, cf. Hadj Ali (1992: 66).
- 115 In one such case, the son of the spiritual leader of a zaouïa in Djelfa was given the large contract to build the road axis between Djelfa and Tougourt, reportedly in return for the brotherhood's support of Bouteflika. Cf. *Le Matin*, 7 October 2003.
- 116 Several interviewees pointed out this factor when asked how people in their party or ministry were being recruited.
- 117 This agreement was concluded within the framework of the Barcelona (EuroMed) Process and focused primarily on co-operation and reforms in the economic and financial as well as the security domains, and – to a lesser extent – on social and cultural co-operation and exchange. Though it included a small number of articles on political dialogue, these remained very vague.
- 118 President Chirac on a visit to Tunisia in December 2003 did not hesitate to praise Ben Ali for the fact that his human rights record was far more advanced than that of other countries, and declared that Ben Ali's modernization of Tunisia had paved the way for democratic consolidation, cf. *Le Monde*, 5 December 2003.
- 119 Algeria's participation in the NATO Dialogue began in February 2000. In May 2002 a part of the NATO fleet for the first time visited Algeria and in 2003 such a visit was repeated.
- 120 This was, for instance, done through an army-organized symposium on international terrorism held in Algiers in October 2002 and visited by dozens of foreign officials.
- 121 Cf. *International Herald Tribune*, 12 December 2002; *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 3 May 2003.
- 122 Cf. Chapter IV.4.4.2.
- 123 Interview (27 January 2002).
- 124 Interview in Paris (2 November 2002).
- 125 This competition was a topic frequently written about in the French and Algerian press; cf., for instance, *Le Figaro*, 1 March 2003; *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 29 April and 7 June 2003.
- 126 The civil war barely affected this trend, cf. Entelis (1999: 17).
- 127 Diplomats of various European countries lamented these developments to this author off the record, but no formal statements were issued.
- 128 Cf. *Le Matin*, 9 and 10 August 2003.
- 129 Cf. *Le Matin*, 10 August 2003.
- 130 For example the dealings of the Algerian–American joint venture Brown & Root Condor, cf. *Le Matin*, 9 and 10 August 2003.
- 131 Interview in Paris (6 November 2003).
- 132 Cf. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 26 January 2004.

VII Conclusion: prospects for change

- 1 Interview (24 September 2002).
- 2 Zakaria (1997: 23) distinguishes between democracy and constitutional liberalism and sees these as roughly corresponding with Freedom House's political liberties and civil liberties, respectively. Main elements of constitutional liberalism are the

rule of law, private property rights, separated powers and free speech and assembly and basic human rights.

- 3 The paper asked high school students on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution what this date meant to them and what their relationship to the French was. Answers given included: 'November the first marks the launching of the war, but we do not know why we celebrate . . . When the French were in Algeria, our life was better organized. After independence the French should have stayed with us' and 'I think that if the French had not granted independence, Algeria would have been better off.' Cf. *Liberté*, 31 October 2002.
- 4 Cf. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 20 April 2004.
- 5 Cf. *El Moudjahid*, 10 April 2003.

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